

THE INDEPENDENT

Thursday 27 November 1997 45p (IR50p) No 3,467

starts
a new
ethic at
nham

INSIDE TODAY

**Polly Toynbee
on New York's
anti-shoppers**
21/COMMENT

**Feel creative?
Get thee to
a boozier**
9/NEWS



**M
People:
good, or
what?**

18/FEATURES

**Humphrey
Lyttelton, an
improbable
youth cult**
THE EYE

TODAY'S NEWS

Aids cases rise

A United Nations report published yesterday to mark World Aids Day estimates that the number of people infected with HIV or Aids has risen by half in the past year to 30m, with 2.3m expected to die this year. The increase is entirely among poor people, in poor countries; Aids is falling among rich nations, where treatment is improving. Page 7

Illegal trade in immigration

Organised crime syndicates are offering "package deals" to bring people into Britain with forged papers. The deals cost up to £10,000 per person, and Chinese triads and the Russian mafia are involved. Page 4

The end of coal?

Up to half of Britain's deep-mined coal pits could close, with the loss of about 5,000 jobs, as power stations switch to gas. Labour ministers struggled to defend the consequences in the Commons yesterday. Politics, page 15, and Business, Page 23

SEEN & HEARD

The Italian Parma Ham Consortium is threatening legal action against Asda because the supermarket slices the meat in Wiltshire. Although it uses Parma pigs, Asda is under pressure to rename its product 'Chippenham Ham'. "If we import Parma ham and cut it in our store delis, we can still call it Parma Ham," said Asda. "But if we want to cut and pre-package it, they are saying we have to do that in Parma."

TELEVISION The Eye, page 12
CROSSWORDS Page 32 and
the Eye, page 9
WEATHER The Eye, page 10

Web address: <http://www.independent.co.uk>

How much truth does it take, Winnie?



Down cast: Winnie Mandela at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission yesterday Photograph: Judah Ngwenya/AP

It was a blistering attack, and it came from the pulpit. When it ended, a couple of breathtaking, passionate hours later, it seemed that the remains of Winnie Mandela's credibility had been blown away. Mary Braid reports.

Apartheid, said Bishop Peter Storey, South Africa's leading Methodist priest, had been South Africa's "primary cancer". But, with Mrs Madikizela-Mandela sitting just feet away, he argued that "secondary infections" had set in, eroding some people's sense of good and evil.

Moral collapse was at the centre of the 1988 murder of Stompie Seipei Moeketsi, 14, the township activist Mrs Mandela was found guilty of kidnapping. "It's possible," he warned the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, "to become like those that we hate most."

He did not name Mrs Mandela, who was convicted of the kidnapping in 1992, but not of the killing. Yesterday, however, everyone at the hearing knew win the bishop believed had fallen from grace. The murder of Stompie, he said, was about more than the killing of a child. "It is about the ruthless abuse of power, and it resembles much too closely the abuses of the apartheid system itself." He said that truth was too often "trimmed to political winds or suppressed because people have vanished or feared for their lives", but he hoped it would finally prevail.

Mrs Mandela, standing for deputy leadership of the ANC next month, against the wishes of the leadership, sat stony-faced. But the bishop's searing indictment drifted from the hall towards the Johannesburg headquarters of the ANC, a few miles away. For he also condemned the ANC for trying to cover up Mrs Mandela's guilt. An ANC Crisis Committee, he said, had been primarily interested in damage limitation.

Some activists had been brave enough to distance themselves from Mrs Mandela. "If only other members of the movement had had the courage that they had we would not be sitting here today," said Bishop Storey. The TRC, which must expose the atrocities of the apartheid era, has heard that Stompie - and three other youths - were abducted from the Soweto manse of the Rev Paul Verryn (now a Methodist bishop), where they had sought sanctuary from the security police. They were taken by the notorious Mandela United Football Club, Mrs Mandela's personal bodyguard which terrorised Soweto.

Mrs Mandela claimed Mr Verryn was sexually abusing the boys and that Stompie was a police informer. This week, the boys said Mrs Mandela threatened they would die if they did not make false allegations against the minister. After their abduction they were beaten for three days. When they were finally released two weeks later, Stompie was missing. He was later found on wasteland with his throat slit.

Yesterday Bishop Storey described how the church and the community tried to persuade Mrs Mandela to let the boys go. Every effort was "stonewalled".

For the first time Bishop Storey released contemporaneous notes of a message he sent to Mandela. Stanley Mogoba, then the head of the Methodist Church, reported back the future president's response. Even the short notes made by Bishop Storey after he was debriefed by Mr Mogoba betray the sadness of the encounter. After Mr Mogoba explained Mrs Mandela's rejection of mediation, Mr Mandela conceded that the "fault is hers" and apologised for an "ugly situation."

In what, with hindsight, was a turning point in his relationship with the woman who had kept the struggle and his hopes alive, Mandela asked Mr Mogoba whether he should advise his wife to call a press conference, make a public apology and seek forgiveness. The Bishop replied that might already be too late. Eight years on Mrs Mandela has yet to apologize or request forgiveness. She still denies taking part in his assault or murder.

Yesterday Stompie's mother Joyce listened as the Rev Paul Verryn (now a bishop), the Sowetan priest Mrs Mandela almost ruined with false allegations, offered her another chance. Just seconds before he had broken down during a public apology to Mrs Seipei, who says all she wants is for Winnie to tell her what happened to her son. Bishop Verryn said he felt he had not taken threats against Stompie seriously enough. "Had I acted in another way he could be safe and with us now," he said through tears.

He then turned and gazed at an uncomfortable-looking Mrs Mandela. "I have been profoundly hurt by the things you have accused me of," he said. "I forgive you even if you do not want it, or do not think I deserve to give it."

Mrs Mandela had surely had enough priests. But the Archbishop Desmond Tutu, TRC chairman, asked her if she wanted to make any public response to Mr Verryn in the spirit of reconciliation. She declined, saying through her lawyer that she preferred to "communicate" in private.

Labour's warm embrace for the old private school enemy

A new partnership between Labour and private schools was proclaimed by the Government yesterday. Judith Judd and Lucy Ward compare rhetoric and reality behind yesterday's announcement of co-operation between state and public schools.

Fourteen years after Labour's election manifesto pledged to abolish private schools, the Government has told them that their future is safe. The more recent threat that they might lose their charitable status unless they could justify it is also receding.

Instead, there is to be a new government advisory group which will devise ways in which state and private schools can co-operate, and £250,000 for partnership-pilot projects.

A further £250,000 will be provided by Peter Lampl, a millionaire businessman who earlier this year funded a summer school for state-school pupils to encourage them to apply to Oxford University. Mr Lampl told *The Independent* last night that he wanted to encourage able children from non-privileged backgrounds to benefit from the excellent facilities available at many independent schools. Britain was allowing a lot of talent to "go to waste because many bright young people are not being given the opportunities to realise their full potential", he said.

The money will be used to help state school pupils study in private schools, for example in minority subjects such as Latin, for Oxbridge entrance or even short periods of boarding. Summer schools to help



Fettes College: the Prime Minister's old school

HOW THE PARTY LINE HAS CHANGED

THEN: Labour Manifesto, 1983: "Private schools are a major obstacle to a free and fair education system, able to serve the needs of the whole community. We will... integrate private schools within the local authority sector where necessary."

slow readers are another possibility. Compared with the assisted-places scheme, which used taxpayers' money to fund places for pupils from poor backgrounds in independent schools and which was abolished by the Government this summer, the money involved is tiny.

But Mr Byers, the first Labour minister to address an independent schools conference, insisted that it was symbolic of a completely new ap-

NOW: Schools standards minister Stephen Byers yesterday: "The time has come for old prejudices to be buried. I want you to know that the Government is looking forward to working in partnership with you to raise standards."

proach. He told the Girls' Schools Association of leading private-school heads in Bristol: "The time has come for old prejudices to be buried. I want you to know that the Government is looking forward to working in partnership with you to raise standards."

He even acknowledged that Labour's threat to abolish independent schools might have been one of the reasons why it was defeated so

badly in 1983. He said: "The Government has made it clear that we wish to build bridges wherever we can across education divides. The education apartheid created by the public/private divide diminishes the whole education system."

On the subject of charitable status, which saves independent schools millions of pounds each year, he said: "Let me make it clear. It is not part of our agenda to encourage the Independent Charity Commission to withdraw charitable status."

Ministers would not compel private schools to make any changes, Mr Byers said, and their standards would not be compromised.

Mr Byers denied that the new projects were a reinvention of the assisted-places scheme. The crucial difference, he argued, was that pupils would remain on the roll of their state school. State schools would have to agree that their pupils should study for part of the time at an independent school.

The heads applauded him warmly. Jackie Lang, the association's new president, said: "It is a historic day. Mr Byers has done more than bury the hatchet. A great axe has been buried."

But she said that there were still obstacles to overcome: some Labour local authorities and state school heads are expected to resist attempts to cream off their brightest pupils for eveo part of the time.



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COLUMN ONE

End of the road for Ford's family favourite

Old cars do not die, they just change their names. The latest badge to fall from favour is one of suburban Britain's most loved: the Ford Escort.

Considered to be the marque's most popular name ever, Ford confirmed yesterday that production will cease in 2000. To add injury to insult, the company will waste little time easing the Escort out - and will be promoting its new model, the CW170, next year. Of course, we have been here before. The Mondeo replaced the Sierra, and the Escort itself replaced the tail-finned Anglia. Few thought the car would so effortlessly rise above its humble beginnings as a family saloon when launched in 1968.

The Mark I Escort (below) rolled off the production line as a sedan saloon which crawled from 0-60 in a hair-lowering 22.3 seconds, and eventually attained a top speed of 75 mph. Since then, the Escort has undergone five reincarnations. The latest 1.8 injection two-door cabriolet reaches



60mph in 10 seconds and has a top speed of 120 mph.

Rarely has a car been so successful. More than 18 million have been made since the original launch and 4.5 million have been sold in Britain, where it has become synonymous with boy racers and "first-car" families. Thanks to its sporty overtones, it was guaranteed star appeal. The late Diana, Princess of Wales, was the proud owner of a 1.6 litre model and the former Chancellor, Ken Clarke, raced around in a red XR3i.

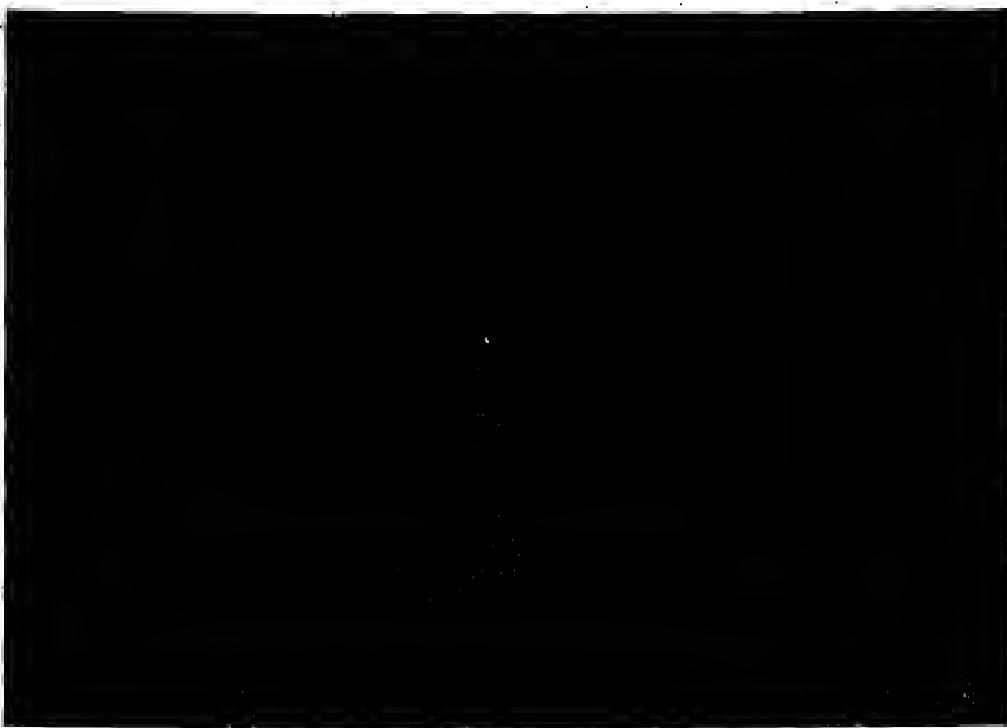
For Ford, which once revelled in the Cool Britannia image generated by the unique Britishness of its car fleet, Europe's shores are much more alluring. Instead of being built at Halewood on Merseyside, the Escort's replacement will be manufactured in Cologne and given its world debut at Paris next autumn.

And what's in a name? Quite a lot. Ford are paying an advertising agency £500,000 to come up with a new one. Manufacturers know that if you choose the wrong moniker, the punters will vote with their wallets.

Etched on the tombstones that litter the great motor-makers' graveyard, are the improbable sounding Vauxhall Velux, Riley Elf and Sunbeam Stiletto. But it is not just yesterday's motorists that have suffered sniggers and wry smiles from fellow drivers. After all who admits they once owned a Nissan Charade or the unfortunately pronounced VW Sharan?

— Randeep Ramesh, Transport Correspondent

PEOPLE



Funeral anguish for Luxor massacre family

The body of Joan Turner (above), the British grandmother killed in the Luxor massacre, has been mixed up with that of a Swiss tourist and flown to Switzerland by mistake.

The error brought further distress to members of her family, who are also mourning the loss of Mrs Turner's daughter Karina, 24, and five-year-old granddaughter Shaunnah, who were also murdered.

Halifax deputy assistant coroner James Turnbull admitted yesterday that a body which had been lying in a funeral parlour in the town since the weekend was not the 53-year-old Briton but was probably that of a unknown Swiss tourist. He added: "It is probable an unidentified body in Zurich is Joan Turner. In view of that, the coroner has withdrawn the bur-

ial order until matters are sorted out." He said dental records had been swapped with officials in Zurich.

Mrs Turner's family were preparing to bury her in her home village of Ripponden, near Halifax, West Yorkshire, today with her daughter and granddaughter.

A family member, who has not been named, had originally identified Mrs Turner's body at the coroner's area of Heathrow airport last Saturday. A post-mortem examination was carried out and it was moved to a funeral parlour in Halifax while the family made funeral arrangements.

A total of 68 people - mostly tourists - were killed when militant Islamic gunmen opened fire on tourists visiting ancient monuments in the southern Egyptian town. The other British victims

were: George Wigham, 69, and his wife Ivy, 71, from Swanley, Kent, and 26-year-old Monarch Airlines stewardess Sylvia Wilder, who lived in London.

A militant organisation calling itself the al-Gamaa al-Islamiya (The Islamic Group) admitted responsibility for the attack, claiming it was a failed attempt to take hostages to trade for the freedom of its spiritual leader, an Egyptian cleric jailed in the US for plotting to bomb New York landmarks.

Meanwhile Thomson, the UK's biggest tour operator, announced yesterday that it has cancelled the rest of its winter tours to Egypt following the massacre. The company said it had made the decision after the "vast majority" of its customers booked to Egypt had opted to transfer or cancel.

— Ian Burrell

UPDATE

HEALTH

Discovery may help tackle obesity

A signalling mechanism discovered in the brain which governs appetite and metabolism could lead to new treatments for obesity.

It has long been known that the hormone leptin acts in the central nervous system to reduce food intake and body weight, but experiments with rats have now shown that it operates through a particular molecular key, or receptor, in the brain. Receptors are distinct sites on the surface of cells which have the right molecular shape for specific chemicals to bind on to and exert their effects. The principle is similar to a key fitting a lock. In the case of leptin, the hormone binds to the melanocortin-4 (MC4) receptor, causing a "reduce weight" signal to be released.

Research carried out at the University of Washington, in the United States, found that rats which had their MC4 receptors chemically blocked were unaffected when treated with leptin. Those in which the receptors were left unaltered consumed less food and lost weight when given the same amount of the hormone. Dr Randy Seeley, who led the research, said: "Identifying a role for the MC4 receptor in mediating the effects of leptin in the brain may be an important step in advancing our understanding of how the brain controls food intake and body weight, and, subsequently, will help us treat health problems such as obesity."

CRIME

Victim charity in plea for more help

The Government should pay for a support service to help witnesses in all criminal courts, according to the Victim Support charity in its annual report today.

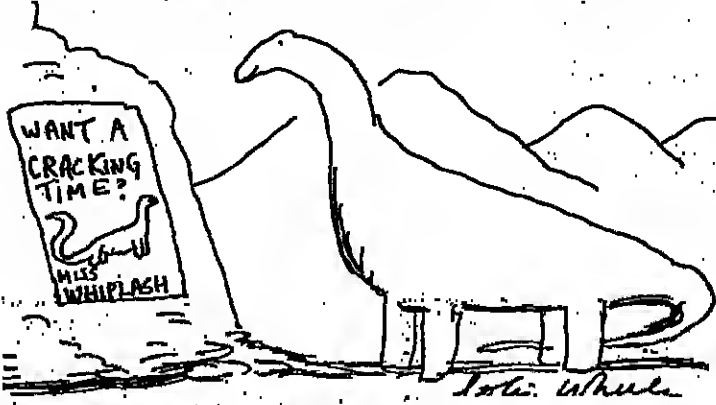
At present, the Witness Service, run by Victim Support and funded by the Government, provides information and support for victims, witnesses and their families only in crown court cases. Last year, 97,600 took advantage of the help, a rise of 25 per cent on the previous year. However, the charity points out that more than 90 per cent of cases are only heard in magistrates courts where there is little support for witnesses. The charity says in some areas it has set up ad hoc groups in magistrates courts, using money from private donors, the National Lottery and charitable trusts, but believes the Government should fund a nationwide service.

Helen Reeves, director of Victim Support, who will press the case with the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, at the charity's annual general meeting today, described the service in magistrates courts as the "missing piece of the jigsaw". She said: "There are over 500 magistrates courts in England and Wales and many of them are stuck in the past with no support for victims and witnesses."

— Michael Streeter, Legal Affairs Correspondent

SCIENCE

How dinosaurs cracked the whip



The real Jurassic Park may have been alive with the sound of whips. A new theory suggests that dinosaurs such as the brontosaurus may have cracked their tails like huge whips to woo lovers and intimidate rivals.

Nathan Myhrvold, head researcher at software giant Microsoft, who studied physics at Cambridge University, has developed computer simulations of the tail movement of sauropods - herbivorous dinosaurs - to back the theory. The giant creatures, which included brontosaurus and diplodocus, had long necks and tails and stood on four legs. Myhrvold examined the tails of eight fossil sauropods and noticed that the tail vertebrae were longest about a quarter of the way down from the base - a known site of stress in a whip. In half the specimens, the vertebrae were fused at this point, possibly indicating stress injury.

Myhrvold believed these fossils were males who cracked their whip in sexual and aggressive displays. "Males whipped their tails to get a date," he told *New Scientist* magazine.

Some experts remain sceptical, however, pointing out that the violent motion would damage soft tissues. Peter Dodson, from the University of Pennsylvania, said: "Whipping delicate blood vessels around at the speed of sound doesn't sound like a wholesome thing to do."

— Charles Arthur, Science Editor

ENVIRONMENT

Lingering legacy of acid rain

Despite big cuts in air pollution which causes acid rain, the damaged rivers and lakes of Wales have shown next to no recovery from acidification, a scientific study has found.

The Welsh Acid Waters Survey 1995 found no improvement in fish and other freshwater life since a previous investigation back in 1984. Yet during this period UK emissions of sulphur dioxide, the most important acid rain pollutant, fell by 35 per cent - mainly due to a fall in coal burning by power stations. Welsh river and lake water became slightly less acid, and lower in sulphur, but the invertebrates, fish and the dipper - a small bird which scurries along stream bottoms in search of invertebrate prey - showed no recovery at all. It is estimated that about 8,000 miles of rivers and streams are affected.

— Nicholas Schoon, Environment Correspondent

7.30 FOR 8



by Chris Priestley

Woodward case lawyer claims defence rift

An American lawyer who met recently in England with Susan Woodward, the mother of Louise Woodward, has claimed in a sworn affidavit that a gaping breach has opened up between the British nanny and her defence lawyers in Boston.

While the allegations raise questions about the lawyers' relationship with EF An Pair, the nanny agency that placed Woodward in America, their credibility of the claims came under swift attack.

In the papers, submitted to the court that tried Woodward but sent straight back by return post, Daniel Shea, a small-time lawyer from Houston, Texas, reports that Mrs Woodward complained that she was fighting efforts by the lawyers to appeal the manslaughter conviction imposed on her daughter.

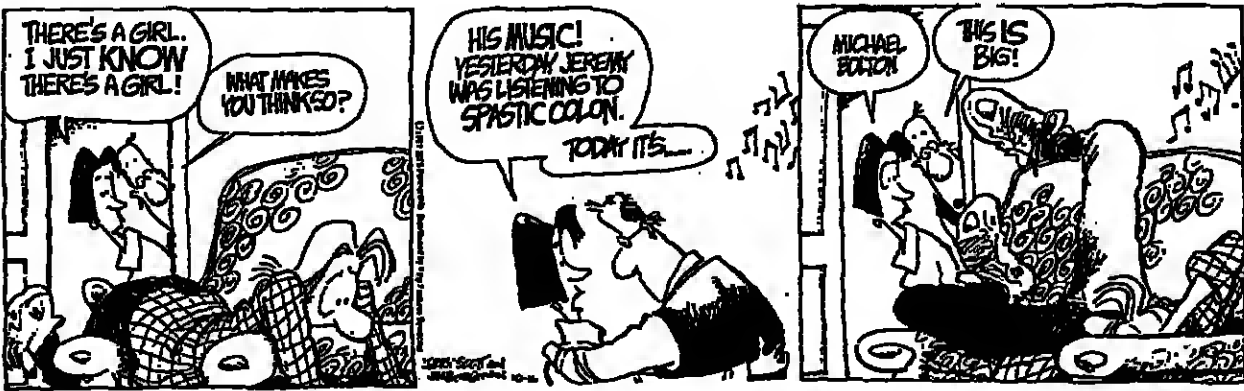
Initially found guilty of second degree murder in the death of baby Matthew Eappen, Woodward was later given a reduced manslaughter conviction by Judge Hiller Zobel, and released on time served.

Mr Shea asserts that EF An Pair wanted Woodward to proceed with an appeal. He says that if Woodward's name is cleared it will reduce the risk of a civil liability case that the Eappens may file against the agency. That could imply a conflict of interest for the defence.

There is, however, little to back up Mr Shea's claims. Andrew Miller, the Woodward's constituency MP, who attended the 16 November meeting between Mrs Woodward and Mr Shea, said Mr Shea had misrepresented Mrs Woodward in his affidavit. "There is absolutely no question that the family is determined to clear Louise's name," Mr Miller said.

— David Osborne, New York

ZITS



by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

GRRRACEFULLY TAKEN



Just roll it round your tongue.

W & J.
GRAHAM'S
THE PORT OF AUTHORITY

CONTENTS

World news	5	Architecture	18
Smoking	6	Features	19
Aids	7	Leader, letters	20
Arts	9	Comment	21
Education	11	Obituaries	22
European news	12	Business	23-28
Wine	13	Sport	29-32
Politics	14, 15	Listings	The Eye, 7-9
World news	16	Weather	The Eye, 10
Pacific rift	17	TV & Radio	The Eye, 11-12

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.36	Italy (lira)	2,800
Austria (schillings)	19.98	Japan (yen)	210.45
Belgium (francs)	58.67	Malta (lira)	0.62
Canada (\$)	2.31	Netherlands (guilders)	3.20
Cyprus (pounds)	0.83	Norway (kroner)	11.65
Denmark (kroner)	10.89	Portugal (escudos)	288.66
France (francs)	9.50	Spain (pesetas)	239.52
Germany (marks)	2.84	Sweden (kroner)	12.50
Greece (drachmel)	453.88	Switzerland (francs)	2.30
Hong Kong (\$)	12.54	Turkey (lira)	312.034
Ireland (punts)	1.09	USA (\$)	1.63

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT

**Film and pop
in your 32-
page Eye on
Friday**



**Jeanne Moreau:
'I'm past the age
when the aim is to
seduce THE EYE**



**De Niro: happy
in Stallone's
shadow**
THE EYE



**The alien's
return: chill,
chill, chill**
THE EYE



'I said, "How many?"': Bobbi McCaughey in bed at Iowa Methodist Hospital Center, Des Moines, Iowa, before the birth of her septuplets

Miracle septuplets take a public bow



Alexis May McCaughey, one of the septuplets, at Blank Children's Hospital, Des Moines

Normally petite Bobbi McCaughey's stomach measured 55in when she gave birth to septuplets - twice the norm for a full-term pregnancy and nearly as big around as she is tall. "It was scary ... watching the stretch marks go ever so higher and wider and just thinking, how much longer can this body keep going?" Mrs McCaughey told America's *Dateline NBC* yesterday.

She and her husband, Kenny, were shocked to discover she was carrying seven foetuses. "I said 'How many?'" Mr McCaughey said. "She goes 'Seven' and I go 'Arrrrghhh!' Theo I go 'No, oo, no, no. Are you serious?'" The Iowa couple experienced "sheer terror" but "it didn't take very long ... for the shock to wear off and get used to the idea that we're going to have a very big family."

They have spoken of the faith that got them through the pregnancy, but Mrs

McCaughey said there were moments of doubt. "First, it was just like 'God, why have you done this to us?' Like it was something that was wrong." The morning of the delivery, when she felt "like death warmed over," faith did not come easily. But she had told Paula Mahoe, who delivered the septuplets, that aborting some foetuses to reduce the risk was out of the question.

The four boys and three girls, the only living septuplets in the world, continued to show improvement yesterday. Natalie Sue, the second-smallest, was removed from her ventilator and upgraded to fair condition. Kenneth Robert, the oldest and heaviest, has been breathing without a ventilator since Friday, two days after the children were born by Caesarean section. Their siblings remained in a serious condition, which doctors say is normal.

— Jejo Moyes



Kelsey Ann McCaughey, one of the seven Photographs: AP/Dateline NBC

**Spencer pleads
poverty in divorce
proceedings**

Earl Spencer pleaded poverty in his divorce proceedings in South Africa, arguing that most of his family's £100m fortune was tied up in the Northamptonshire estate at Althorp, where his sister, Diana, is buried. Steve Boggan says that few observers believe he is broke - especially the newspapers which he was last night trying to gag.

He is reported to have personal wealth of £6m, an income of £1m a year and a family fortune of £100m but yesterday Earl Spencer was portrayed as a man who was a little strapped for cash.

Lawyers representing him at his divorce hearing in Cape Town said all his assets were tied up, either at Althorp or in London and Guernsey-based family trusts. He could not, they argued, afford to pay the £3.75m being demanded by his estranged wife, Victoria Lockwood.

On the third day of the hearing, which will decide whether the full divorce case will be heard in South Africa or England, the High Court was told that the earl, 33, was left in South Africa, where he now lives, with "only" two houses, their contents, two trucks and a Mercedes.

And, just in case that was likely to produce a few sniggers, his lawyers were busy trying to prevent the media in South Africa from reporting the details. They applied last night for an injunction against the *Cape Times* in an attempt to stop it and its sister paper, the *Argus*, from publishing details of the



Victoria Spencer: has demanded £3.75m

case, even though it is being held in open court.

They argued that his eldest of four children, Lady Kitty, had been upset by gossip at her school and by roadside *Cape Times* posters referring to "Spencer's Other Women". The paper was fighting the application last night on the grounds that details were freely available on satellite television and in foreign newspapers.

In court, pleas for poverty on Earl Spencer's behalf were ridiculed by Jeremy Posnansky QC, who is appearing on behalf of Lady Spencer as an English family law expert. He introduced the details of Earl Spencer's wealth on Monday - figures which have not been contested by his side.

The earl has offered a settlement of only £300,000 for Lady Spencer and his four chil-

dren and has suggested she could not be trusted with the £3.75m she has demanded. Rejecting that figure, his lawyers referred to the five months she spent undergoing treatment for alcoholism and eating disorders. In her turn, she alleges that he had affairs with 12 women during that time.

Commenting on Earl Spencer's assets, Mr Posnansky said: "It is surprisingly common that when a divorce court approaches, a husband's businesses go down."

During attempts to reject the figure of 12 extra-marital affairs, Leslie Weinkove, for Earl Spencer, pointed out that Lady Spencer's side had named "only" three - Sally Ann Lason, Chantal Collopy and Josie Borain. "He is asked as to whether he had adulterous affairs with them. If there are 10 or 12 people involved, would it be usual to pick only three of them?" asked Mr Weinkove.

The hearing will decide whether the couple's full divorce will be heard in South Africa, Earl Spencer's choice, or in England, where most of his assets are and where Lady Spencer would most likely land a larger settlement.

The question of whether the outcome could be fully reported was being argued at the High Court. Kanthan Pillay, the *Cape Times* managing editor, said the paper planned to appeal if Earl Spencer's gagging order was granted. "We will be arguing that a substantial number of our readers already have access to details about the hearing on CNN, Sky, the BBC and the Internet," he said.

"Also, this hearing is in open court, so all we are doing is acting as the eyes and ears of the public. It would be ludicrous to stop our readers from seeing information that is already freely available."

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Gangs move into people smuggling

Thousands of illegal immigrants are being smuggled into Britain by organised-crime groups like the Russian mafia and Chinese triads. Jason Bennett, *Crime Correspondent*, outlines a new crackdown on the multi-million pound business.

Illegal immigrants are paying up to £10,000 each for special "package deals" that include forged documents and the services of a lawyer to help them stay in this country. The smuggling networks run by international "godfather" figures are being targeted by M16, M15 and a new unit of police and immigration officers, which was announced yesterday.

The initiative follows evidence that international organised criminals are becoming increasingly involved in the smuggling of people, frequently from Turkey, China, and the Indian sub-continent. They are being brought in to work in the sex industry as prostitutes, as cheap agricultural labour, and in search of a better life.

The number of people caught illegally entering Britain has risen from 60 in 1991 to 700 in the past year, although only a small fraction of the immigrants are caught. They pay from £3,000 to £10,000 to be brought in. A current smuggling ring being investigated involves immigrants, probably from China or India, being smuggled into Britain via a complicated route across several countries. On arrival the people are given legal advice and help in applying for asylum, along with forged and counterfeit documents, such as passports and ID cards. In other cases people are

paying thousands of pounds to be hidden on vehicles, including being attached to the undercarriage of a bus, and brought over on the Channel Tunnel or ferries. The racketeers are prepared to invest considerable sums in modifying coaches and lorries so that they can hide illegal immigrants. In May a Spanish man was jailed for two and a half years after he was caught trying to smuggle nine Chinese people in a vehicle through the Channel Tunnel.

Immigrants are also flown over, using forged and counterfeit documents. Some end up in prostitution, including a case in which more than 100 Brazilian women were smuggled into London in the 1990s to work as high-class call-girls.

Chinese triads in London have employed women illegally brought in from Thailand and Malaysia to work as prostitutes in brothels where they are held as prisoners. Others work for "gangmasters", picking crops for meagre wages.

The criminals involved include groups from Britain, Russia, China, Nigeria and Colombia. The extent of the problem was disclosed yesterday by Mike O'Brien, the immigration minister, who said: "Vast profits are being made. It is becoming a big business to bring people into Britain and other European countries."

"There is increasing evidence that criminal organisations that have previously seen opportunities in drugs and prostitution now see new opportunities in illegal immigration."

A new unit was being set up to go after the "godfathers of immigrant smuggling". The Organised Immigration Crime Section will have a staff of five or six dedicated officers drawn from the National Criminal Intelligence Service and the Immigration Service.



Students protesting against Government plans to introduce tuition fees on the march near Euston, central London. The demonstration was organised by the Campaign for Free Education. Photograph: Charlotte Bromley Davenport

Discharged mental patient killed wife

A woman killed by her mentally ill husband had not even been warned he had been discharged.

Glenda Cooper, *Social Affairs Correspondent*, reports on a damning report yesterday that found his care fell below acceptable standards.

Michael Horner, 52, was discharged from an acute psychiatric ward at Queen's Park Hospital, Blackburn, in March 1996. The following day he telephoned the hospital to say he had killed his wife. By the time police got to the house he had hanged himself and his wife Hazel had been strangled.

The independent inquiry published yesterday found that his care had fallen below acceptable standards, his illness was not taken seriously and he was not correctly diagnosed. Mr Horner, who was suffering from a paranoid personality disorder and depression, was left without a primary nurse

for the last 12 days of his month-long stay, and his discharge was seen as a "misjudgement" the report into Blackburn Hyndburn and Ribbles Valley health care trust said.

Mr Horner was sent home without his wife being informed by hospital staff. She was planning to leave her husband and was packing when he returned to their home in Lower Darwin, Lancashire.

We consider that the discharge of Mr Horner to home while his wife was still there packing with a view to move out within three days was most unfortunate and probably contributed to her death," the report states.

It also said that a full-risk assessment of Mr Horner should have been made before his discharge because he had attempted and threatened suicide while an in-patient.

There was also concern about a lack of communication between staff and the report highlighted a general "laissez-faire" attitude, which led to poor standards in patient care. It also showed a lack of close personal involvement with consultant psychiatrist Dr David Franks and stated that as a patient Mr Horner had been inadequately observed.

The day after his release, when Mr Horner rang the hospital ward to say he had killed his wife, the report also shows there was some delay before staff rang police. When officers finally arrived at the house they found the two bodies.

Lisa Rawlinson, 31, one of the Horners' two daughters said yesterday that if her mother had realised her husband was coming home she would have moved out.

"My mum has died unnecessarily," she said. "Her death could have been prevented by one telephone call to tell her he was coming out."

"To have lost one parent is horrifying enough but to lose two is devastating."

Marjorie Wallace, the chief executive of the mental health charity Sane, said: "It is chilling to read the inquiry's own conclusions that Michael Horner's suicide was 'predictable and regarded as almost inevitable'. 'Nevertheless he was discharged home by staff who knew his wife was planning to leave him. No one consulted his wife or family in this critical decision - as so often happens."

BBC rapped over Irish portrayal

The BBC has been slapped on the wrist for upsetting both the Irish and the cabinet minister Frank Field.

In its monthly report, the Broadcasting Standards Watchdog, yesterday upheld complaints from 150 viewers, including the Irish Tourist Board, about episodes of *East Enders* which portrayed Ireland as populated by drunks and idiots.

Also in the Broadcasting Standards Commission report was criticism of the BBC's *Watchdog* programme for investigating a £40,000 trip by MPs to South America. The BSC upheld a complaint from Frank Field, now minister in the Department for Social Security, about a *Watchdog* programme that secretly filmed members of the social security select committee.

Hospital meals contained glass

A major investigation began yesterday at a children's hospital after young patients' meals were contaminated with glass, metal, chewing gum and cardboard.

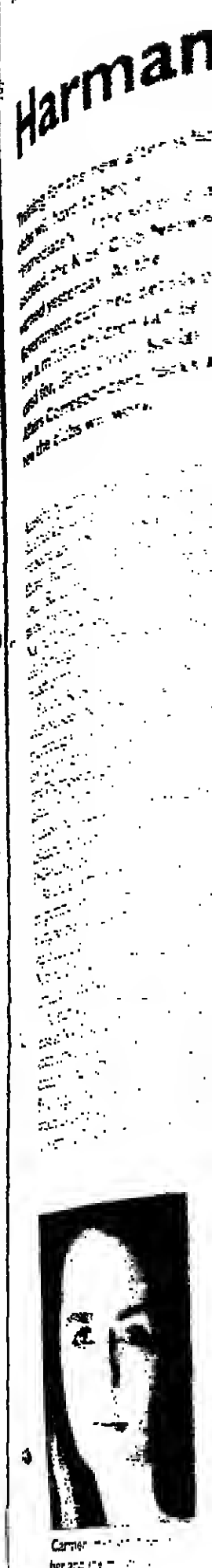
Detectives were called to Booth Hall Children's Hospital, Manchester, after parents spotted the objects. They are now investigating the possibility of sabotage after eight instances in just six weeks.

Detective Chief Inspector Mike Stanfield said: "We are trying to find out if anyone would have a motive for doing such a thing. It is not clear if the contamination is as a result of an accident or broken machinery or if it is something more malicious."

Spray paint 'causes asthma'

Thousands of workers across Britain risk contracting asthma from spray paints, it was revealed yesterday. The Health and Safety Executive is targeting a type of paint, known as "two-pack", which contains chemicals called isocyanates. It has now issued an information sheet to encourage paint shop workers to be more aware of the risks and take greater steps to avoid suffering permanent ill health.

Dr Nerys Williams, of the HSE, said: "Vapours, spray mists, dusts and deposits containing isocyanates are highly irritant... and can result in sore eyes, runny noses, sore throats... Ultimately, they can also cause asthma." It has been estimated that 500 cases of asthma due to isocyanates have occurred within a recent three-year period.



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THE INDEPENDENT
THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER 1997
5

Harman's after school care dream holed by lack of staff

Training for the new after-school clubs will have to begin "immediately" if the scheme is to succeed, the Kids' Club Network warned yesterday. As the Government outlined details of how a million children can be cared for, Glenda Cooper, Social Affairs Correspondent, looks at how the clubs will work.

Accessibility, affordability and quality were the three key words for after-school clubs, the Secretary of State for Social Security, Harriet Harman, told lone parents yesterday. Revealing that three quarters of the money for the clubs would come from the National Lottery, she reiterated the Chancellor's pledge that there would be a club in each community.

But the Kids' Club Network (KCN), which oversees the present 3,000 clubs, said that training would have to begin "this Monday" if enough staff were to be trained in time. The pressure group Gingerbread also called for lone parents to also be allowed to access the wage and training subsidy for childcare trainees at present open only to 18-24-year-olds.

Around £100m from the welfare-to-work programme will be used to train 50,000 young people as nursery and play staff, leading to qualifications. Ms Harman told the National Council for One Parent Families annual conference.

Assistants at an after-school club should have an NVQ level 2 in playwork and co-ordinators a level 3, said Anne Longfield, director of the KCN. But at present less than 50 colleges are offering the qualification which takes between six months and a year to complete. The KCN are also worried that



Play time: David Blunkett and Tony Banks lend a helping hand with pre-school children at the Bromley by Bow Centre yesterday. The facility was chosen by Harriet Harman to launch plans to expand childcare provision to help single parents back return to work

Photograph: David Rose

tween 3.30 and 6.30pm although it varies from community to community. They are often set up by parents with input from the local school and sometimes with help from business as well.

Most are charities, although some are run as small businesses. For funding they rely on parental fees (typically around £15 per week), fundraising activities and grants from the local authority. Many clubs offer a holiday scheme as well (when fees are around £40 a week) and some offer breakfast time, recognising that many people need to be in the office before school starts.

Children have supervised activities which can range from games such as football to creative arts and crafts. The aim is to allow children to play in safety.

Such clubs are governed by the 1989 Children's Act, which states that when children under eight are being looked after for more than two hours a day the staff must be registered with local social services and subject to police checks. For every eight children there must be one member of staff.

It was also revealed yesterday the money for the clubs will come primarily from the lottery - £220m out of £300m. The rest has come from the Department for Education and Employment (£50m) and £30m from the windfall tax.

the price of the course (between £600 and £800) may put people off. "We would want the Government to give some help with the cost," said Ms Longfield. "And there must be a push to get more colleges on board to offer this qualification. Training will have to begin next Monday if there is to be enough staff available around the country."

Liz Sewell, of the lone parent group Gingerbread, called for lone parents on the new deal to get the same wage and training subsidy as young people if they became childcare trainees. "Many lone parents would welcome the opportunity to train if they were able to receive a benefit/wage subsidy and a budget towards training and kids'

clubs would benefit from their existing child rearing experience," she said.

Ms Harman said that there would be no "national blueprint" for the clubs but that they would build on the existing models.

There is no one absolute for how an after-school club works. Rather they adapt to the community they exist in - whether

a factory area in Manchester which copes with mothers working shift patterns, a deprived area of south London where parents are only charged £1 a session, or an affluent middle class area where more is charged.

After-school clubs are generally based in schools, community centres, youth clubs and church halls. They generally open be-



Carmen: Her son misses her and she misses out

Why the working life is not always a bed of roses for the single parent

Carmen Fielding, a single parent who wanted to return to work, found child care hard to find, expensive and inadequate.

Not wanting to be labelled as one of those single mothers who deliberately become pregnant in to obtain a council flat and

sponge off the state, I decided to return to work when my son was three years old.

I looked for work locally but couldn't find anything that paid a reasonable salary, so decided to go back to the City. I thought that by returning to work I would be better off - financially, mentally and socially. Also that my son would benefit from having a working mother. I soon realised it wasn't that

easy. Although my son went to a state nursery, he was considered too young for teatime club and therefore had to be looked after by a childminder.

When at five he was finally old enough, I thought, "great, now we will be able to afford some of those little luxuries in life". Not so. For a start teatime club has to be paid for if you are working (regardless of income). It operates for only two hours

after school, so if you can't get home until 7pm further child care is needed. After 6pm it is considered unsociable hours and is charged at double the rate. Child care is very costly.

My son comes home with a reading book and list of spellings every day and is expected to complete these tasks. By the time we get in at 7.15pm, he is often very tired and gets stressed at having to rush

through his book and spellings so that I can have him in bed by 7.30pm. He quite often ends the evening in tears.

I thought that perhaps the teatime club could help him with his reading, but they do not have enough staff to listen to individuals read. As a result my son is in the bottom group of his class for reading ability. Educationally, he is not benefiting from after school care.

After school clubs don't operate during the holidays, so for those without a flexible childminder this can prove a nightmare and again extremely expensive finding short-term reliable child care.

Even though I have been back at work for two years, my son still misses me desperately. He can't understand why I have to go to work, especially when other children's mothers

don't seem to. Events put on by the school are usually during working hours, so I miss out and my son again feels disappointed I can't be there.

It is unfair to force single mothers out to work by reducing their benefits and do not see how providing more after school clubs is going to improve things. They will have to be free and operate for longer hours and during school holidays.



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First drag of the day: scientists discover why it tastes so good

Yes, that first cigarette of the day tastes wonderful – better than all the others which follow, in fact. But why? The usual explanation is that the pleasure comes from the rush of the nicotine – an addictive drug like cocaine or heroin – reaching a body which has been starved overnight. That doesn't explain, though, why the others don't taste so good, yet seem as necessary.

But scientists have now pinned that early-morning buzz down to the drug's particular effects on nerve receptors in the brain which respond to dopamine, a chemical which regulates mood and behaviour.

And as behaviour is partly shaped by the reinforcement of rewarding events, we keep trying to repeat that first "hit".

This reinforcement process goes on in a part of the brain called the ventral tegmental area (VTA) where neurons respond to the chemical messenger dopamine. Addictive drugs act on the VTA and exploit the reinforcement-reward cycle.

John Dani and colleagues at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, explain today

in the journal *Nature* how they examined rat brains which contained groups of dopamine receptors, and looked at what happened when they added nicotine in the concentrations found in smokers' blood.

At first, the neurons fired more powerfully but then the responses moved down – meaning that it would take a greater input to excite the same response.

Also, that first cigarette will tend to last a long time: nicotine in the blood has a half-life of about two hours. But once they have been exposed to nicotine for more than five minutes, the dopamine receptors' sensitivity begins falling. The researchers found in three tests that the nicotine concentrations found in a smoker's blood during the day do not let the dopamine receptors recover their sensitivity. To provide enough nicotine to excite the receptors to their first-of-the-day level you would probably need as much that you would vomit.

Only when nicotine intake stops during sleep do the receptors recover and make the first cigarette seem so delightful.

— Charles Arthur

— Charles Arthur



Morning high: Cigarettes taste better after a night's sleep, and now scientists know why Photograph: John Lawrence

Labour set to ban under-18s from buying cigarettes

The Government hinted yesterday that it is to raise the legal age for tobacco sales from 16 to 18. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says the public health minister, Tessa Jowell, is planning a White Paper to help adults kick the habit and curb the rising trend among young girls.

The legal age for buying or supplying cigarettes and tobacco is likely to be raised from 16 to 18 as part of a wider package of measures to curb smoking in the New Year in a White Paper on public health.

Tessa Jowell, the public health minister, made it clear that the Government was moving towards equalising the legal age for tobacco and alcohol at 18 to make it easier for shopkeepers to stop sales to children. There could also be help to wear adults off tobacco by encouraging family doctors to prescribe nicotine substitutes, such as nicotine chewing gum or patches, on the National Health Service.

Ms Jowell told the cross-party Commons Select Committee on Health that she was concerned by the rise in smoking among children, particularly girls. Children of 12 were buying cigarettes, and shopkeepers believed it would be easier to stop sales if the legal age was raised to 18. The White Paper is also expected to propose an identity card for young people as proof of age which could apply to alcohol and tobacco.

There could be new curbs on cigarette machines. "We are also concerned with the ease with which young people are able to buy cigarettes from machines and the way that health warnings may be obscured," she said.

More curbs on smoking in public places could be introduced, but she indicated the

Government would avoid legislation, where possible, to maintain public support for its action. "This is not about heavy and intrusive government. It is about doing what we can do to protect children from the harm that tobacco and smoking does," Ms Jowell said.

The minister was given a grilling by Labour and Tory MPs over the Government's decision to seek a permanent exemption for Formula One motor racing from a ban on tobacco sponsorship at the council of health ministers on 4 December. She brushed aside renewed Tory claims that the decision was linked to the donation to Labour Party funds of £1m by Bernie Ecclestone, the Formula One chief, but she faced the toughest questioning so far from Labour MPs.

Ms Lowell responded by giving the clearest signal yet that she will offer a compromise at next week's European council, but she said she was not prepared to negotiate in public. It is understood Britain has a fallback position to delay a ban for 10 years, but the European Commission is seeking to cut the delay to five or six years.

Meanwhile, Ms Lowell was accused of breaching industrial guidelines by failing to deliver a memorandum to MPs on the cost of imposing a ban. Tory MPs will challenge her next week when she is called to give more evidence to a Commons committee on European legislation over the alleged breach in the rules.

David Clark, the Chancellor of the Duchy, said on 18 November that the Government required all departments to publish compliance cost assessments for all regulatory proposals likely to have an impact on business, charities and the voluntary sector. Guidelines for ministers say the assessment should be prepared at the same time as an explanatory memorandum on proposed EU legislation is laid before parliament.

Party to publish donor spending

Labour's treasurer has promised to consider publishing details of how donations are spent after criticism from left-wingers over the Bernie Ecclestone row. Margaret Prosser told a meeting of the party's National Executive Committee yesterday that she would look at the possibility of giving its members a fuller break-down.

Although annual accounts are published at each year's conference, they do not explain how individual donations have been

Tony Blair used his opening statement at yesterday's meeting to express his regret that the issue of Mr Ecclestone's £1m donation to Labour and the subsequent decision to exempt Formula One from a tobacco sponsorship ban had not been better handled.

for Hackney North and Stoke Newington, over the affair. He told her he would have preferred her to raise her concerns privately rather than in public. Later a party spokesman said that Ms Abbott had missed the Parliamentary Labour Party's debate on the issue but had criticised the leadership on a radio programme on the same day.

However, Ms Abbott said she had not been aware that the Prime Minister had criticised her.

Later the Conservatives tried to make oew capital out of the row at Prime Minister's Questions in the Commons, complaining that the latest £1m donation to Labour had come from a company which paid its workers £2.98.

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Lethal epidemic is much larger than feared



Bare facts: Sufferers Aileen Getty (left), Glenn Gaylord, Gretchin Adams and David Herndon-White are 'exhibits' at a Los Angeles art show designed to counter fears about Aids, with viewers invited to 'Please touch'. Photograph: UPPP

Many more people are infected with the HIV virus than previously thought - probably 30 million in all, according to the United Nations. But the victims of this 'invisible epidemic' are mostly in Africa. In Western Europe the number of new Aids cases is dropping sharply; in the United States, new cases are falling for the first time in nearly 20 years. John Lichfield reports from Paris.

The poor countries are getting sicker and the rich countries are getting better - better treatment, better informed and better behaved.

This was the underlying message of the UN report published to mark World Aids Day yesterday.

A combination of greater public awareness, improved precautions and the increased use of the new anti-retroviral drugs has, for the first time, seriously checked the HIV/Aids epidemic in the industrialised countries.

In the developing world, and especially in Africa, the virus continues to take an extraordinary, and often hidden, toll of suffering. It is estimated that 2,300,000 people will die of Aids-related diseases this year, a 50-per cent increase on 1996. One in five of the victims will be children, mostly infected from birth. New infections, although much slower in Europe and the US, are occurring at an "alarming rate" in Africa and parts of Asia and Latin America.

The UN-Aids programme now admits that it has "grossly under-estimated" the number of people who have the HIV virus, and full-blown Aids, in Africa. The missing victims - about 4,600,000 more than previous calculations - account for a large part of the vastly increased global estimate of the reach of the virus. The UN now believes that 30,000,000 people in the world have HIV or Aids, a 50 per cent increase on last year's figure. Of these, 5,800,000 people were infected during the course of this year. "The main message of our report is that the Aids epidemic is far from over. In fact, it's far worse," Peter Piot, executive director of the UN Aids programme, told a press

conference in Paris yesterday.

Much more needs to be done to increase awareness of HIV, and the methods of safe sex which can control its spread, Mr Piot said. The UN estimates that nine out of 10 HIV victims around the world, mostly in the developing countries, are not even aware they are infected. Even in the West, Mr Piot said, prevention campaigns are not sufficient.

"I have a daughter at a lycée here (in Paris) and what she's getting in terms of sex education is inadequate."

Bernard Kouchner, the French Health Minister, said he intended to push for the creation of a world-wide fund to combat Aids, especially in the developing world. Two-thirds of all HIV victims are in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the UN report. One in 12 of sexually active adults in Africa has the virus; one in 10 in South Africa.

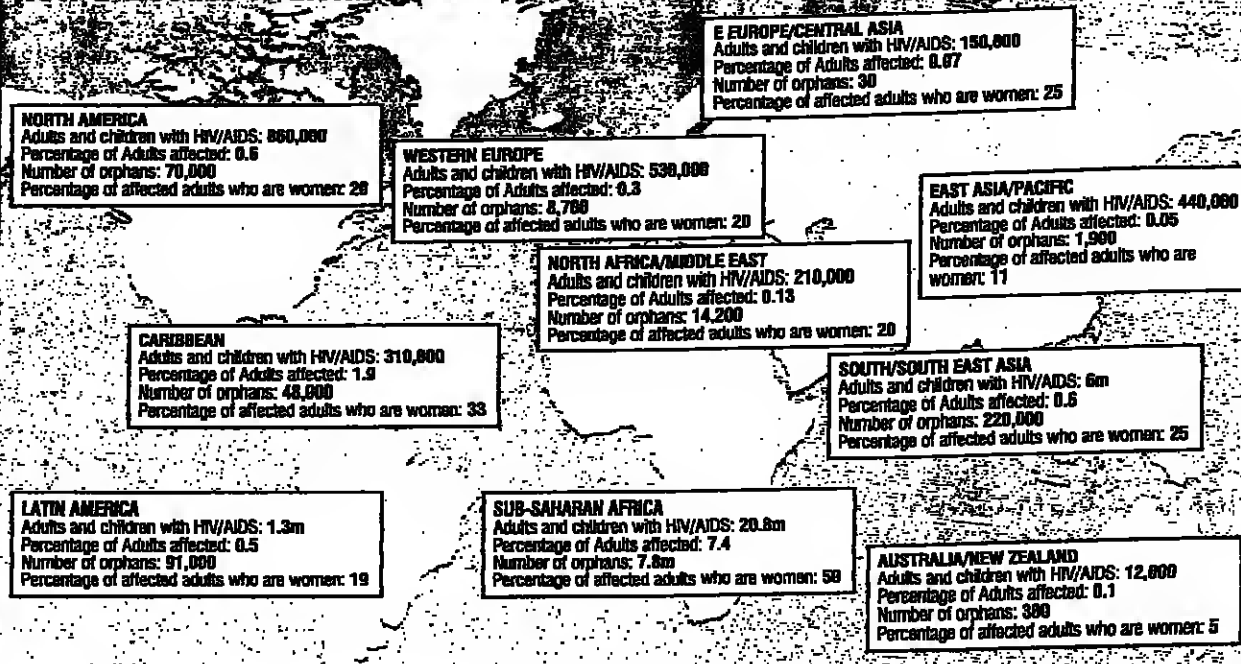
The impact of HIV on the continent is so devastating that it has wiped out 30 years of gains from improved nutrition and medical treatment. In Botswana, life expectancy has collapsed to the levels seen in the late 60s. In Zimbabwe, 10 years has been wiped off the life expectancy of every child born since 1990.

In Asia, where HIV did not strike until the late 1980s, the UN also reports worrying trends. The sheer size of Asian populations makes the prospect

of a full-scale epidemic horrifying, the UN warns. Two separate outbreaks are reported in China, one among drug-users in the south-west of the country, another among homosexuals along the eastern seaboard. In India, the infection rate remains small, in proportional terms, only 1 per cent of the adult population. But this still represents up to 5,000,000 people, making India the country with the largest number of HIV victims in the world.

Although Mr Piot warned against complacency, the report suggests that a significant turning-point has been reached in the battle against HIV in the industrialised world. The number of new Aids cases in Western Europe will drop by 30 per cent this year, partly because of the use of the new drugs which arrest the onset of Aids proper, partly because the number of HIV infections is declining. In the US, figures suggest that the number of new Aids cases fell by 6 per cent last year, the first fall since the epidemic began in the late 1970s.

How a disease is dividing the world



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Countryside Alliance

The Old Town Hall, 367 Kennington Road, London SE11 4PT

Organisers of the Hyde Park Rally on July 10th 1997

26th November 1997

Dear Members of Parliament,

Tomorrow, some of you will vote on a bill which directly affects the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in the countryside; and is of concern to millions of others throughout the United Kingdom. The bill is Michael Foster MP's proposal to ban hunting with dogs.

On 10th July, 120,000 of us came to Hyde Park from all corners of the country and our message was "Listen to us". For a long time, we have felt that our views have been neglected, misrepresented and misunderstood. On that day, we made a powerful statement and our message did get through. Before you vote tomorrow, we want to remind you of that occasion and why we passionately oppose Mr Foster's bill. As custodians of the countryside, we should have a right to say how it should be run and we feel bitter and insulted by the suggestion that we enjoy or condone cruelty.

Although we speak on behalf of supporters of all country sports, let us consider the specific facts on foxhunting. The fox is a recognised pest which preys on lambs, piglets, poultry and ground nesting birds. Even Mr Foster has recognised this. It also needs to be controlled in a way which ensures a healthy and balanced population of the species. There are four legal methods of control: shooting, hunting, trapping and snaring, and terrier work. Shooting with a high powered rifle is efficient but is impractical in many areas, a rifle's range being up to two miles. Inexpert shooting with unsuitable weapons will lead to wounding and death from gangrene or starvation. Trapping and snaring require specialist skills and are not suitable for general use. Illegal methods such as poisoning and gassing are indefensible.

Hunting is the best way of culling foxes by natural selection. A fox in prime condition is faster and smarter than any foxhound. The odds are in favour of the fox and most that are hunted survive. However, old and diseased foxes are dispatched. Should a fox be caught by hounds, its death is very quick and there is no risk of wounding. One hound kills the fox in exactly the same way as a terrier kills a rat. That's nature's way, not man's. We do have the healthiest fox population in Europe and, paradoxically, that is because of, not in spite of, hunting.

Those who follow hounds, either on horse, foot or in cars, do so to admire the skill of a huntsman working his hounds in the spectacular setting of the countryside. They do not hunt because they enjoy the kill. The occasion unites rural communities and is a complete way of life for many people. Some of the most beautiful parts of our countryside are those where farmers who hunt give special attention and care to woodlands, hedgerows and other wildlife habitat.

There is no possible benefit from a ban on hunting, least of all to the fox and we fail to understand how anybody who looks carefully at the facts could believe otherwise. The result would be 15,000 job losses, a catastrophic effect on the UK's horse industry, devastating economic repercussions particularly for hill farmers, unregulated control, and, in some areas, possible destruction of the fox. The bill would not save the life of a single fox.

Mr Foster says, why not go draghunting instead? Apart from the fact that draghunting plays no part in the management of the fox, it is also a completely different, purely equestrian sport. It is wholly unrealistic to believe draghunting could replace more than a few jobs; and the effect on the hound population and horse industry would still be drastic.

We believe everyone in the country should have the freedom to choose whether to go hunting or not, as their conscience dictates. And farmers should be able to control vermin on their land, as their conscience dictates. This bill is a profoundly anti-libertarian measure which would have serious implications not only for those who hunt, but for anyone who enjoys walking his or her dog in the countryside.

We therefore ask that Mr Foster's bill be opposed. And opposed strongly, as proof that Members of Parliament - most of whom represent town dwellers - actually legislate on behalf of us all. Please do not criminalise the lawful activities of hundreds of thousands of your fellow countrymen.

We are proud that this is a free country. Let's keep it that way in the countryside too.



Robin Hanbury-Tenison
On behalf of all those who attended,
or supported, the Countryside Rally.

This is a reproduction of a letter which was sent yesterday to every Member of Parliament.

سكزا من الامم

Let children take more risks, says school head

Schools and parents should stop wrapping children in cotton wool and let them take more risks, Jackie Lang, president of the Girls' Schools Association, says the dangers of the modern world have been exaggerated. Judith Judd, Education Editor, reports on a warning to overprotective parents.

Pareos are "running themselves ragged" ferrying children from one activity to another and cocooning them from risk.

Mrs Lang, head of Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks, Kent, said some children at her school did not own overcoats because they were brought to school, wearing their blazers, in a car every day.

She told the GSA conference in Bristol yesterday: "Children aren't allowed to walk to school or catch a train or bus. They can't disappear for hours into the countryside or town. They have to be supervised and entertained at all times. Their parents run themselves ragged to fill the hours when once they would just have gone out to play or mucked around."

"So the poor kids have gym club on Monday and tennis on Tuesday and violin lessons on Wednesday and extra maths on Thursday and Brownies on Friday - all worthwhile activities in themselves and in moderation, but it's a frenetic life."

As a result, she said at a press briefing earlier, "They never

have to wait at a wet bus stop, never had to buy a ticket, never have the fun of sitting on the top of a double-decker bus in London and of learning to be independent."

We were in danger, she added, of rearing a generation that could not assess risks and which might be tempted into "drink and drugs and dodgy sex and driving too fast" to satisfy their natural urge to be daring.

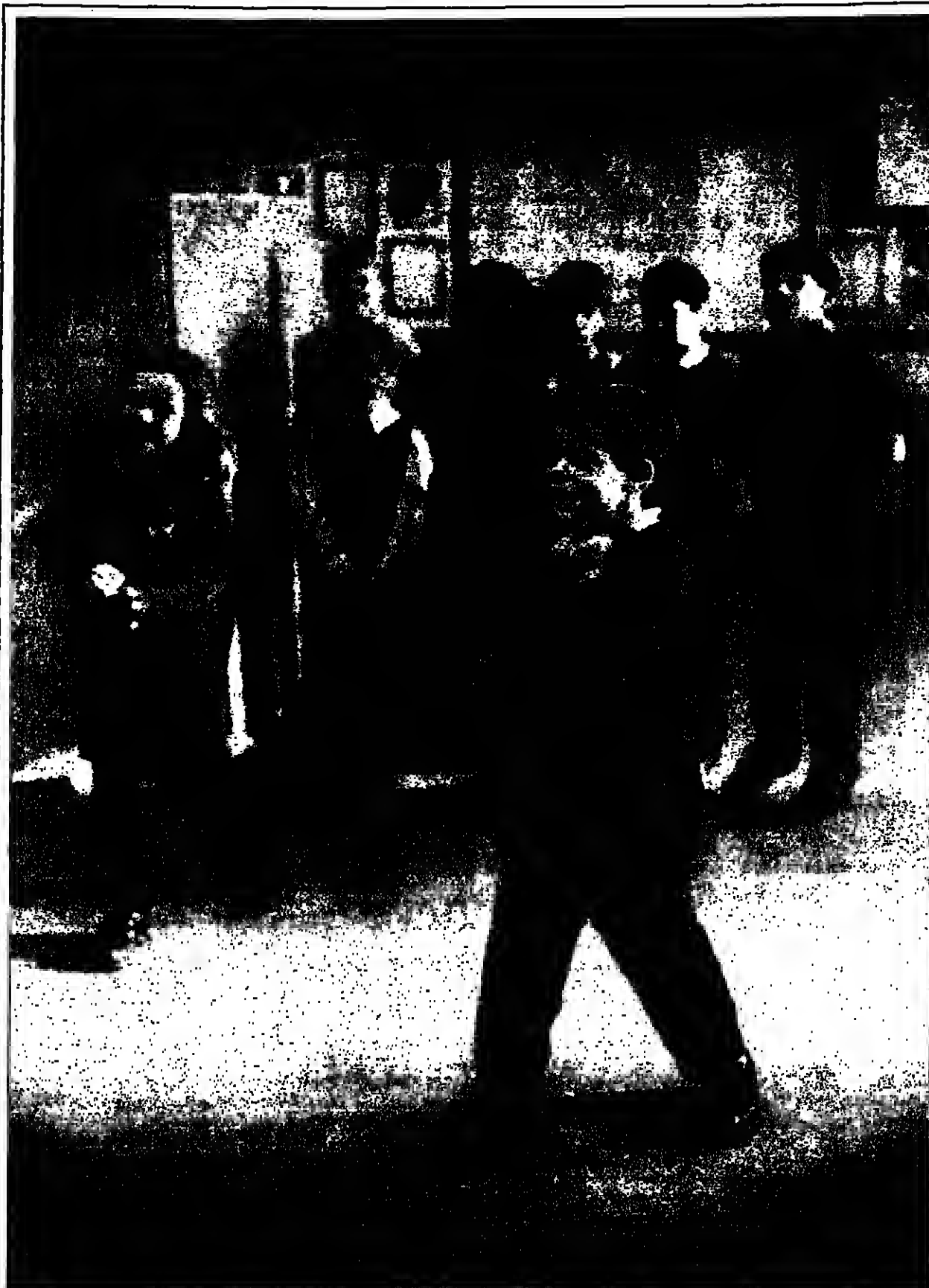
She said that we had to stop thinking in such extreme terms. "We hear about Dunblane. We hear about murders and rapes because information about them is so universally available. We are maybe exaggerating their likelihood."

Parents and teachers should ensure that young people knew what to do if there were a mishap rather than trying to prevent a possibility of them ever coming into contact with a mishap.

"If we teach children in a blanket way that all strangers are evil, that they should over-smile at a strange adult, that they should hurry from door to door, we are breeding an unhealthy climate for them."

Schools, too, were under pressure to cocoon children because they were constantly in fear of the worst-case scenario. "Schools are deeply afraid of slipping up in some way... they are afraid that putting a foot wrong with a child will result in a damaging court case."

She admitted that when she was at school she had not been a terribly good girl. "I always have a soft spot for those who break the rules provided that they are not doing it out of malice."



Vocal exercise: Pupils at East Sheen Primary, south London, experiment at the opera workshop Photograph: Tom Pilsten

Purple wigs and flying handbags bring opera into the classroom

Think opera is all about fat ladies singing? Seven-year-olds at south London primary schools can tell you otherwise. Lucy Ward, Education Correspondent, listens in on music lessons with a difference.

As far as class 3P at East Sheen Primary School is concerned, opera comes in a purple punk wig and pink tights and stomps around throwing its handbag about. What is more, it does not happen in another language on a distant stage, but right in front of you in your classroom. And - and this is best of all - you can join in.

Class 3P are only seven or eight years old, but yesterday they were treated to an early taste of Mozart, Handel and Ravel thanks to the Curious Opera Group. The company, based in Teddington, south-west London, sends a team of three professional performers - a mezzo-soprano, a pianist and a director/coordinator - into primary schools to help youngsters explore the link between feelings and music.

For the 30 members of Mrs Pemberton's class, the emotion being musically explored yesterday quickly became apparent. They had barely settled cross-legged in the school hall, when the singer Harriet Roberts, in Jennings-style grey shorts and half-mast socks as the naughty child who will not do his homework from Ravel's opera *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, stamped angrily in front of them.

Without warning or introduction, Harriet burst into song at full volume, prompting hand-over-mouth

shock, giggles, suspicion and sheer wide-eyed amazement. Unexpected opera never fails to have an effect, according to Curious Opera's organiser Anne Hornby.

Led by Lynn Binstock, workshop co-ordinator and head of staff directors at English National Opera, Class 3P worked out just why the naughty child was angry, and compared his frustration with the miserable fury of Dorabella, the betrayed sweetheart in Mozart's *Costi fan Tutte* who wept beneath her purple wig and tossed her pink handbag and stuffed toys around the room.

Gathering round the piano, they composed, sang and acted a phrase describing their own feelings when angry - a heartfelt "I get really, really, really in rage" - before creating their own cardboard "Pandora's Box" filled with collage materials to represent anger.

Encouraging young children to explore angry emotions can bring revelations, according to Ms Binstock. "A lot comes out about families, and bothers and sisters or parents being unfair. In one school, we could really feel something bubbling up and it turned out the kids were upset about the dinner ladies ordering them about. We did a whole dinner ladies number."

David Ford, head of East Sheen, laments the lack of time for such sessions as the pressures of the national curriculum combine with parents' ever-rising interest in the three Rs. "There is a greater place for groups like Curious Opera than ever before - they provide schools with the opportunity to give kids experiences we may not have the resources to provide any more."

Audit Commission blames lack of nurseries plan for drop in playgroup places

Councils have a long way to go to meet the Government's timetable for scrapping nursery vouchers, say public spending watchdogs. Lucy Ward explains why, even though education authorities have been told to expand nursery education, playgroup places are being closed.

Local education authorities are often ignoring the role of playgroups or private nurseries as they draw up plans for more nursery places, the Audit Commission said yesterday. Its study found that only half of LEAs had formal systems for consulting private and voluntary nurseries, despite being required to work together with other providers to fulfil government promises on expanding pre-school education.

In some cases, moves by LEAs to open new nursery classes had led existing playgroup places to close because of over-provision, auditors found. Elsewhere, failure by LEAs to plan adequately meant vacant nursery places - in two-thirds of schools in one authority - were not being removed. Where there were enough places, they were sometimes unevenly spread.

Auditors carried out their review last month as LEAs worked to fulfil targets on nursery places. Shortly after gaining office last May, the Government acted on its manifesto pledge to scrap the nursery voucher scheme introduced by the Conservatives. Instead, LEAs were required to establish partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors and produce early-years development plans outlining how they would guarantee at least a part-time nursery place for every four-year-old by next September.

According to the commission's review, many authorities "lacked a clear strategy" on which to base their plans. Often, they had too little information on existing provision and levels of need to allow them to plan a strategy properly. There were also variations between authorities in the level of nursery provision for children with special needs.

The controller of the Audit Commission, Andrew Foster, said that although many LEAs had made progress, "much remains to be done if all authorities are to be able to meet the objectives set out by the Government and to ensure all children have access to a quality service."

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Cook dilates on pain of EU enlargement

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Britain will use its European Union presidency to promote sweeping internal changes to clear the way for the historic reunification of Europe, the Foreign Secretary said yesterday. Robin Cook warned that this will mean sacrifices by the EU as well. Katherine Butler reports from Budapest.

In remarks which appear calculated to bring Britain even closer to the European political mainstream, Mr Cook said existing members of the EU would have to sacrifice "narrow national interests" for the goal of "a return to the Europe our grandparents knew".

The alternative would be to allow the divisions of the last 40 years to fester; to replace the Iron Curtain with "a Velvet Curtain separating the haves from the have-nots". Addressing the Hungarian Parliament at the start of a visit to prepare for the launch next year of EU membership negotiations with

Hungary, Poland the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia, the Foreign Secretary stressed the reforms which must be tackled by applicant states.

But equally, he said, the EU would have to confront its own problems, even if that entailed sacrifices. "Without reform, enlargement will remain beyond reach. And for reform to happen, we will all have to accept that our common interest in a modernised and expanded union outweighs narrow national interests".

The Foreign Secretary's remarks signal the Government's willingness to promote not only "Agenda 2000", the package of reforms to the EU's extensive agriculture and regional development policies, but also a shake-up of the bloc's outdated decision-making machinery. Limiting the size of the policy-making Commission, and reweighting the votes of individual governments in the law-making Council of Ministers are both viewed as pre-conditions to enlargement but heads of government ducked them when they were negotiating the Treaty of Amsterdam last June.

Mr Cook sought, however, to draw a clear distinction between the two approaches, stressing to Hungarian leaders that Britain under Labour stood a much better chance of being able to deliver. "As a result of having respect inside the European Union, we can be a more effective ally to our friends outside."

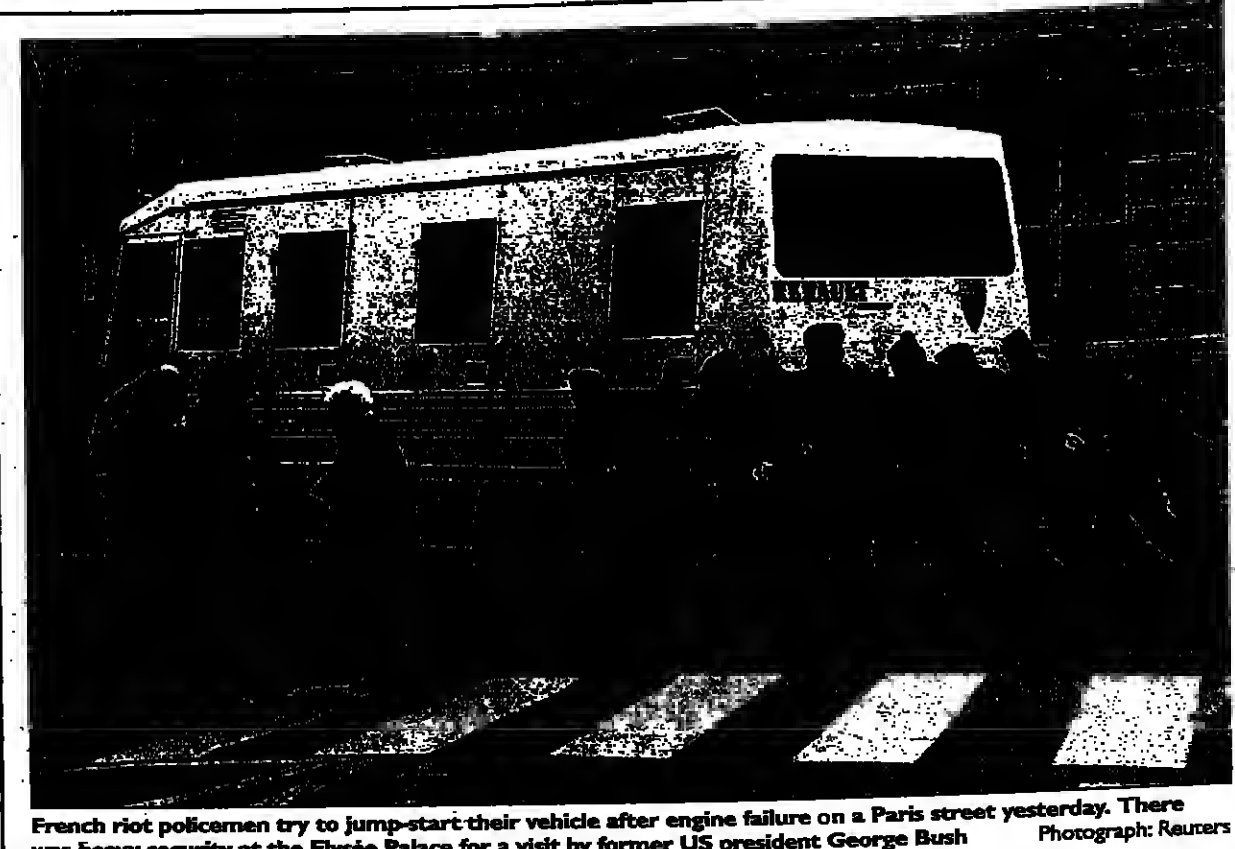
The claim that Labour's "fresh start" with Britain's EU partners has been paying off in terms of influence appeared to have been successfully conveyed in Budapest. Gyula Horn, Hungary's Prime Minister, said he welcomed the new government's backing for enlargement "for its own sake and not merely to avoid deepening which was the attitude of its predecessor".

British soldiers in Sarajevo nightclub row

The Nato-led peace force said yesterday it was investigating allegations that two British soldiers refused entry to a Sarajevo nightclub, threatened a police officer with a gun and stamped on a Bosnian flag.

A Western diplomat said the two British soldiers were making the rounds of Sarajevo night spots after arriving from their headquarters in Banja

Luka in north-western Bosnia. He said they were refused entrance to the Senator night club early on Tuesday morning because they had been drinking and they were carrying weapons. The soldiers pulled down a Bosnian flag, stamped on it, and one of them pointed a gun at a local police officer. The soldiers were picked up by Italian soldiers and put in custody of military police.



French riot policemen try to jump-start their vehicle after engine failure on a Paris street yesterday. There was heavy security at the Elysée Palace for a visit by former US president George Bush. Photograph: Reuters

Students in Berlin march

Thousands of German students took to the streets of Berlin yesterday in the latest of a series of protests against the level of public funding for the university sector. Police said some 9,000 protesters had gathered in a peaceful march through the city centre.

The target of many of the student banners and chants was Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who sought to shift blame for the education cuts of recent years from Bonn to Germany's mainly opposition-controlled regional governments. — Reuters

Swiss lead on land-mines

The Swiss government announced that it will set up an international centre to spearhead the clearance of land-mines globally. Its efforts will back up a new treaty banning their use, production and stockpiling.

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Mine Clearance will work with the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Other countries, including the United States, Britain, France and Sweden, have said they would like to contribute to the centre. — AP

Turkey fined for detentions

The European Court of Human Rights co-ordinated Turkey for arbitrarily detaining six former Kurdish members of the Ankara parliament in 1994.

The court said six members of the Kurdish People's Labour Party (HEP), were held in police custody for 12-14 days accused of separatism and undermining Turkish territorial integrity. It ordered Turkey to pay £3,158 each to two MPs, and £2,632 each to the four others.

Croatia intimidating Soros Foundation, claims US State Department

The US State Department has criticised Croatia for intimidating opposition journalists and non-governmental organisations. A State Department spokesman said that it was "unacceptable" for the Croatian government to engage in the public defamation of a pro-democracy foundation headed by the American billionaire, George Soros.



George Soros: 'Valuable contribution to free speech'

Spokesman James Foley said on Tuesday night that the United States believes that the Soros Foundation is making a "valuable contribution throughout Central and Eastern Europe, including in Croatia, to free speech and democratisation".

He also expressed concern about suggestions that the Croatian government is planning an intimidation campaign against opposition journalists and non-governmental organisations in Croatia. Last Friday, two officials

from an organisation funded by Soros were found guilty of fraud and received one-year suspended sentences. The trial in Zagreb district court was widely viewed as an attempt by Croatian government to crack down on foreign-funded groups that President Franjo Tudjman says "often have illegal and subversive intentions".

The attack on Soros officials came on the heels of Tudjman's speech last December in which he called the Hungarian-born US philanthropist George Soros an enemy of the state. Croat authorities have also expelled from school a prominent human rights activist's daughter who took part in a theft. The daughter of Ivan Zvonimir Cihak — head of a

Croatian branch of Helsinki Human Rights Committee and a staunch critic of the government's policies — was expelled from school last week following her involvement in a theft during a school trip in Italy.

This move was also seen in Zagreb as an act of official pressure on Cihak, who often has been exposed to public defamation for criticising the government's poor human rights record.

Croatia said that it was not trying to stop the work of the Soros Foundation. "All implications of political motives in this case should be dropped since it is obvious that the issue here is intention of financial malpractice," said a government spokesman.

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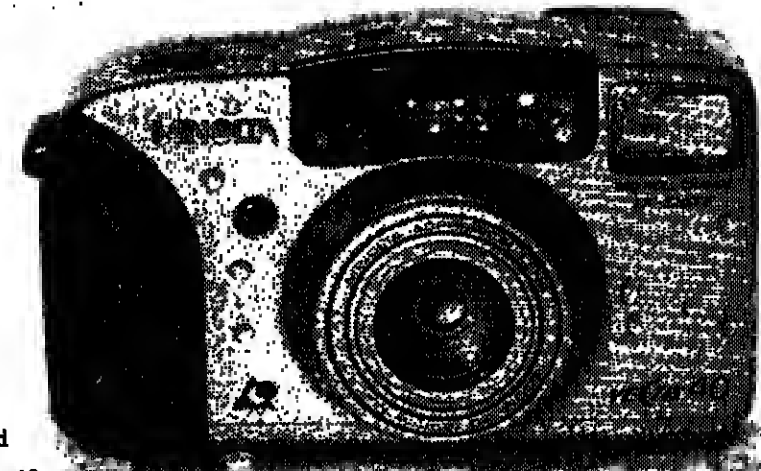
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سكرا من الامم

Whitehall goes on the record as spin doctors tighten grip

The days of the unattributable briefing, may be numbered. The Prime Minister's Office will, from now on, give journalists on-the-record statements, as part of what it claims is a move towards open government.

Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, reports.

Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, is expected to go on the record to make the announcement that the Government is accepting the findings of the Mountfield report.

The aim is to overcome the confusion and lack of confidence caused by off-the-record briefings about Britain's entry into the European single currency.

It will not mean the end of the spin doctors, who will con-

tinue to give briefings off the record, but all Whitehall departments will be expected to go on the record more often.

The changes are likely to be pre-empted as part of the Government's commitment to more open government, but it will also help Downing Street keep closer control of the Whitehall information machine, and to keep ministers "on message".

Downing Street will also establish a unit to co-ordinate ministers and Whitehall press officers in presenting the same message. It will also bring ministers' special advisers under the umbrella of the press office operation for the first time.

Peter Mandelson, the minister without portfolio, and Mr Campbell will play a key role on the central unit, with civil servants and special advisers. The Cabinet Office yesterday defended the rise in the number of special advisers from 38 to 68, with an increase in their salary bill from £1.8m under the Tories to £2.6m.

The additional posts include

the standards and effectiveness adviser to the Department for Education and Employment, and the UK anti-drugs co-ordinator with his deputy. "It is not true that the numbers have soared, and the special advisers were being run down under the last government," said a spokesman.

Mr Mandelson told a press gallery lunch yesterday that the new unit would give "greater clarity" with the new rules of attribution. He also hinted that the social exclusion unit, which he heads in the Cabinet Office, is substantially to widen its brief.

Rejecting as "complete tosh" reports that the Government was bowing to vested interests such as the tobacco lobby and the food lobby, following a report in *The Independent*, Mr Mandelson said the unit would be tackling social exclusion wherever it occurred.

It had made a start on housing estates, schools and truancy, but he said: "It is just a start and we will not be deflected on the course on which we are set."



Westminster arrival: Conservative MP Jacqui Lait, elected in Beckenham last week, arriving at the House of Commons to take her seat for the first time yesterday and being greeted by the Tory party leader, William Hague. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

NHS charging dilemma splits the experts

Two reports reveal disagreement among NHS organisations on whether patients should be charged for NHS treatment. Jeremy Lawrence, Health Editor, says it is an issue that will not go away.

The debate about NHS charges began in the summer after Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, refused to rule them out when questioned about the Government's comprehensive speeding review. The British Medical Association later issued a report suggesting charges could raise up to £5bn extra for the NHS, but said it favoured raising the extra cash through taxation.

A radical government with a large majority should have the courage to consider charging patients for NHS treatment as a way of paying for improvements in the service, a specialist in public policy says.

Geoffrey Hulme, of the Public Finance Foundation, the research arm of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, says it is unlikely that government revenues will be sufficient to meet the needs of the NHS through taxation alone in the short or long term. The NHS is, in a word, unaffordable.

But the NHS Confederation, representing health authorities and trusts, has ruled out charges as inequitable and inefficient. In a report published today, it says making patients pay for visits to the GP or for hospital charges in hospital would deter some from seeking treatment and damage their health.

Writing in the Public Finance Foundation's *Review*, Mr Hulme says if user-charges were introduced, the better-off should pay more and they should be used only for buying extra services which cannot be paid for in other ways.

"Their main advantage is that they are a tax which citizens know will go to the services they want to use, and they will pay at a time when they have the maximum interest in the services," he says.

The NHS Confederation says general taxation "remains the fairest and most cost-effective source of finance for the NHS."

However, the confederation adds that a minimum 3 per cent annual increase above inflation is needed to meet increasing demand and medical advances. This year the increase is 1.37 per cent and in 1998-99 it is 1.66 per cent.

Blair takes charge of NHS reforms

Publication of the Government's long-awaited White Paper on the future of the National Health Service has been postponed for a week to enable Tony Blair to give his personal backing to the proposals which will put family doctors in the driving seat for changes to the way patient care is ordered.

The White Paper was due to be published on Monday, but the Prime Minister has taken charge of the launch of the reforms, which will replace funding by GPs with groups of family doctors acting together to order care from hospitals.

There are increasing signs that Mr Blair could seek to tackle the problems facing the NHS with a big increase in funding for the health service before the next election. A strong hint of a substantial increase in spending on the health service was given by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, when he emphasised his commitment to increase health service funding above the rate of inflation in his pre-Budget report this week.

Doctors leaders emerged from a private meeting with ministers convinced that the

Government is preparing a "substantial" increase in funding for the NHS.

The Government has already provided an extra £300m to avert a crisis in the hospitals this winter. The British Medical Association is privately warning ministers that an additional £500m is needed to avoid the queues growing, but is poised to mount a campaign for a massive increase, arguing that Britain still spends far less on health than its European neighbours. Health spending in Britain, including private health, is 6.9 per cent of gross domestic product; France spends 9.8 per cent, Germany 10.4 per cent, Italy 7.7 per cent, and the United States 14.2 per cent.

— Colin Brown



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15/POLITICS

THE INDEPENDENT
THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER 1997
15

Minister on the rack over threat of pit closures

Labour MPs turned out in force yesterday for a Commons debate to urge a Government rescue operation for miners' jobs. Anthony Bevin, Political Editor, watched the minister helplessly squirm.

John Battle, Minister for Energy, faced determined pressure from Labour MPs in his rear, taunts from the Tories in his front, and the ominous presence of Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio and the Prime Minister's personal trouble-shooter, at his side, during a 90-minute Commons debate yesterday morning.

Frustrated Labour MPs from the coalfield areas of the country, caught between the hard-headed owners of a privatised industry and the Christmas insecurity of miners who again face the threat of pit closure, wanted action.

But Mr Battle had little to offer, apart from an urgent request to Clare Spottiswoode, the Director General of Gas Supply, asking her to consider whether a ban on the re-sale of gas from early gas-fired power stations was anti-competitive.

The presence of Mr Mandelson was last night being seen as an indicator of Tony Blair's real concern that the image of the Labour Government would be damaged by further pit closures and still more sacked miners.

It is known that Cabinet members, including John Prescott, have been trying to help the miners' cause, but the Whitehall consensus is that short of nationalisation or heavy subsidy, there is pitiful little that can be done.

Opening the debate with enormous dignity, Paddy Tipping - who serves as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Jack Straw, Home Secretary, a job that now demands complete loyalty to the Government line - recognised that there was

very limited scope for Government intervention.

But he warned that, even with a deal struck yesterday between National Power and RJB, the country's main coal mining company, redundancies would follow and up to ten pits could close if production was halved to 15 million tonnes, as forecast.

Pushing the limits of his restricted freedom, Mr Tipping asked Mr Battle to tell the mining communities "more clearly, more loudly" what was being done; he urged the Minister to get the owners and the generators together.

He implicitly criticised the lack of a strategic energy policy, saying: "People won't invest in coal or generation unless they know what the Government policy is. I have to say that there's confusion around this at the moment. I hope you will state your position very clearly."

Mr Tipping also urged the minister: "Now is the time to step off the gas" - a direct attack on the new Government's approval for gas-fired power stations, which displace coal-fired generation. "At the end of the day it is gas generation that is pushing coal off the agenda and off the face of the UK," he said.

Mr Battle, who largely addressed the MPs behind him, rather than the House as a whole, said Labour had received an "horrendous legacy" from the Tories. There was no question of subsidy for RJB, and formal complaints had been lodged with the European Commission about state aid subsidies for coal in Germany and Spain. But even if a stop was put on further gas-fired stations, there would be no benefit for coal until well after 2000.

Clearly delighted by the reversal of roles, the Conservatives went to town. Tony Baldry, a former energy minister, pointed out that Robin Cook, now Foreign Secretary, had come out with a six-point plan for coal when he was Opposition spokesman which had included a moratorium on gas-fired power stations.



Brown accepts acclaim

Gordon Brown (right), the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was named Parliamentary of the Year yesterday, and former prime minister Lord Callaghan Elder Statesman of the Year. At the *Spectator* magazine and Highland Park Scotch Whisky awards, Mr Brown said: "I can genuinely say I am very grateful - I am grateful to have survived these last 10 years at all."

John Redwood, Tory trade and industry spokesman, was Questioner of the Year; Backbencher of the Year was Quentin Davies, Tory MP for Grantham and Stamford; and Margaret, Countess of Mar, was Peer of the Year for instigating an inquiry into Gulf War chemicals and the health of the armed forces.

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Compromise PR system urged by Lib-Dems

A compromise form of proportional representation for Westminster elections is suggested by a senior Liberal Democrat in today's *Independent*.

The deal offered by Robert Maclellan, the party's President, could bring a solution to a seemingly intractable dispute between the party and the Government over how the voting system could be changed.

With the announcement of an Electoral Commission - possibly chaired by the Liberal Democrat Lord Jenkins - imminent, senior figures in both parties have been looking for a way forward.

Although the two parties agreed before the general election to set up a commission on voting reforms for Westminster, they have not been able to agree on what type of reforms there could be.

While the Liberal Democrats have insisted on a proportional, single transferable vote system, senior members of the Government, including the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, have not been convinced. They have suggested they would prefer an alternative vote system, which is not proportional and which might in fact give Labour more seats despite the fact that it is already over-represented in Westminster.

Now, Mr Maclellan has suggested a compromise which could combine elements of the two systems.

The STV system is used in Ireland, and allows MPs to be selected proportionally in large constituencies with several



Robert Maclellan: Closing the gap with Labour

members. Under AV, which is used in Australia, there is still one MP per constituency, but voters list candidates on the ballot paper in order of preference. The losers can then have their votes redistributed until someone has more than 50 per cent of the vote.

"It is the principles behind our preferred system to which we are ultimately attached: a proportional national out-turn, wider voter choice and, preferably, the attachment of elected members to geographical constituencies," Mr Maclellan writes. The scheme was backed in a recent television interview by Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader.

The joint commission, chaired by Mr Maclellan with Robin Cook before the election, agreed that a commission would consider alternatives to the first-past-the-post system.

— Fran Abrams,
Political Correspondent
Comment, page 21

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Children hunger for peace in Iraq crisis

Nearly 1 million Iraqi children suffer from chronic malnutrition, despite a UN programme that allows Iraq to import limited supplies of food and medicine. Unicef said yesterday. It said the health of Iraq's children had dramatically deteriorated since the UN decided in 1991 to use sanctions to force President Saddam Hussein to give up his weapons of mass destruction.

"It is clear children are bearing the brunt of the economic hardship," said Philippe Heffinck, Unicef's representative in Baghdad. "They must be protected from the impact of sanctions."

Inspectors continued to search yesterday for President Saddam Hussein's suspected arsenal of biological and chemical weapons. Richard Butler, head of the UN inspection mission in Iraq, said he suspected President Saddam was

hiding 200 tonnes of VX gas, which he described as "seven times more potent" than the sarin gas that a Japanese cult used in its 1995 attack on the Tokyo underground, which killed 12 people.

"Why would you subject your whole people to an awful process of sanctions just to have stuff like this?" Mr Butler said in a US television interview. "Why would you forgo \$100bn (£62bn) worth of oil revenue for this?"

Amer al-Saadi, an adviser to the Iraqi leader, said the accusations that Iraq had tonnes of VX were "an exposed lie".

The US Defense Secretary, William Cohen, said President Saddam must not be allowed to exempt his palaces from searches.

Iraq claims it has complied fully and that the US is manipulating the inspection programme to keep sanctions in

place as long as Saddam Hussein remains president. The government newspaper *al-Jumhuriya* said "Iraq will not tolerate any more forces by inspection teams."

In Paris, a foreign ministry spokesman said France called "on all sides ... to show restraint and moderation" in the showdown over inspections.

The US military commander in the Gulf region said America's allies there had told him they wanted "no more pinpricks" against President Saddam should the crisis slide into military conflict. "If there is a requirement to respond, we ought to do it in a serious way," General Anthony Zinni said.

Mr Cohen said any attack on Iraq by US planes and ships massed in the Gulf would be reserved "only as a last option" by President Bill Clinton in consultation with Washington's allies.

— AP, Baghdad



Standoff: A British soldier taking part in manoeuvres in Kuwait yesterday that also involved US, Italian and Kuwaiti forces

Photograph: Reuters

Former US Gulf war ally pleads for Saddam to be readmitted to the fold

The President of the United Arab Emirates yesterday made a move for Arab states to readmit Iraq to their ranks. It is another indication that the solidarity of the coalition which opposed Baghdad in the 1991 Gulf war is weakening.

Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan al-Nahayan said President Saddam Hussein had committed mistakes out of greed, and should be forgiven. "Saddam Hussein is not stronger than others and what emanated from him was a result of greed not only in Kuwait but in the whole Gulf," he told Egyptian editors at the end of a two-day visit to Cairo.

"But greed is part of the nature of humans young and old, and it greets him with the Iraqi president's mind, the Gulf is now well and it is Saddam and his people who are suffering. Let's tell this man that you have erred towards us ... but we now tell you 'welcome back as a faithful brother'."

Sheikh Zaid's comments were the most explicit call yet to rehabilitate the Iraqi leader. In the past, he has called for Iraq to be forgiven without mentioning President Saddam by name.

The UAE was part of the US-led coalition that drove Iraqi troops out of Kuwait in 1991. But the Gulf state has since led a campaign to bring Iraq back into the Arab fold. "The Iraqi people were not at fault. The one at fault is Saddam and I believe that we should be forgiving with the Iraqi president so he could return to the Arab family," Sheikh Zaid added.

He also accused Iran of "trickery", saying Tehran was offering nothing in its bid to improve ties with Gulf Arabs. He said the UAE was not ready to give up an inch of territory on three disputed Gulf islands controlled by Iran. Asked about Iran's attempts at rapprochement with Gulf Arab states, the UAE leader said: "Iran talks without offering anything."

The trial opened in Qatar of 110 people charged with trying to overthrow the ruler of the Gulf Arab state, which has accused Egypt of being behind the plot.

Seventy defendants, all Qatari nationals except for a Sri Lankan, a Saudi and a Bahraini, were brought under heavy guard to a packed courtroom in Doha, the capital. Of the 110 people on trial, 40 are at large, including two Egyptians and one Tanzanian. They will be tried in absentia.

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State funeral for dictator Banda

Kamuzu Banda, the former president of Malawi, who died on Tuesday, will receive a state funeral honouring him as the nation's founding father, despite 30 years of brutal dictatorship. He died in a South African hospital of respiratory failure from pneumonia. Though his official birthday was given as 14 May, 1906, long before birth records were kept in the former British colony of Nyasaland, he was believed to be in his late 90s. The death certificate put his age at 99.

President Bakili Muluzi's government announced a mourning period until 3 December, when Banda will be given a state funeral in Lilongwe with full military honours. The honours for Banda, in spite of his hated rule, showed that Mr Muluzi wanted to give Malawians a chance to pay last respects to the man who led the country for most of its life.

— AP

Obituary, page 22

Leakey party allowed to run

The Kenyan government registered the opposition Safina party of the conservationist Richard Leakey, but the party said it was undecided about fielding candidates in the general election on 29 December.

The decision to register Safina adds a further element to calculations on opposition electoral strength. President Daniel arap Moi, in power since 1978, is favourite to win a final term against candidates divided along ethnic and personal lines.

The strength of Safina, which said it provided the best forum for uniting Kenya's opposition when it first applied for registration in 1995, remains untested.

— Reuters

Congo move on massacre inquiry

Facing a United Nations ultimatum to co-operate with a massacre investigation team, a Congo-Zaire official insisted that the mission already had full access to the country.

"No one is putting the brakes on your mission," Etienne Richard Mbaya, minister of reconstruction and emergency planning, told the team. "Your mission can begin today. You can go where you want."

He added that the panel, led by Aissou Koffi Amega of Togo, could meet President Laurent Kabila today.

The government and the UN team were to agree later yesterday on a date to visit the sites of reported massacres.

On Tuesday the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, threatened to withdraw the team within 48 hours because Congo officials repeatedly barred the team from certain areas since August.

— AP

Ayatollah turns fire on Iran's dissidents

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, yesterday blasted dissidents who have questioned his authority as "enemy agents" and said they would be prosecuted with the full force of the law.

Speaking out for the first time in the row, Khamenei urged Iranians to refrain from taking the law into their own hands and to cease demonstrations denouncing the most prominent dissident, Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri.

"If what they [dissidents] have done is illegal, which it is: if it is treason against the people, which it is — then executive and judicial officials should carry out their duty against these individuals," Khamenei said in a speech carried on state radio and television. "And I am informed that they are going to carry it out and that there will be no laxity. I ask everyone to stop the marches. Of course speakers and writers should continue to clear up the people's minds," Khamenei said. "I urge everyone not to commit any illegal acts ..."

Khamenei was apparently referring to attacks last week by demonstrators on the offices of Montazeri and another prominent critic, Ayatollah Ahmad Azari Qomi, in the Shi'ite Moslem holy city of Qom, 75 miles south of Tehran. Montazeri has questioned Khamenei's qualification to become the spiritual guide of all the world's Shi'ite Moslems in addition to being Iran's supreme political leader.

The controversy erupted last week into one of Iran's most violent demonstrations in recent years. Police used tear gas to disperse pro-Khamenei demonstrators in Qom.

Montazeri, 75, has been Iran's most prominent dissident since founder of the

revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, dismissed him as his designated successor shortly before his death in 1989. Montazeri had criticised government policies including the treatment of political prisoners.

Some moderate newspapers have said in-fighting and daily marches could mar Iran's hosting of a summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference next month.

Speaking to members of the volunteer *Basij* militia, Khamenei said Iran's enemies and foreign media had tried to portray the row as a fully-fledged factional dispute, but reiterated that Iranian officials were united despite some differences.

He added that the dissidents "were enemy agents, even though they might not be conscious of it". But he urged Iranians not to lose perspective of Iran's real enemies.

"You should get to know who the enemy is. World arrogance is the enemy, America is the enemy, the Zionists are the enemy," Khamenei said.

He praised moderate President Muhammad Khatami for dissipating rumours of a split over power-sharing by clearly sticking to the law. The debate over Khamenei's powers has sharpened since Khatami defeated conservative candidates backed by the clerical establishment in May polls.

Under Iran's constitution, the supreme leader is the top state authority. He has absolute power over all government institutions.

Criticism of Khamenei's powers has also come from left-wing Islamists close to Khatami, and a liberal Muslim opposition group. The new president has repeatedly pledged allegiance to the supreme leader and refused to be drawn into the debate.

— Reuters

Dam-busting fish can spawn freely

In a historic decision that has cheered environmentalists across the nation, the United States government has refused to renew the licence of a large river dam in Maine and ordered it to be destroyed to make way for spawning fish.

It marks the first time in US history that federal authorities have opted to dismantle a functioning hydro-electric dam in favour of returning rivers to species of fish.

The implications for the hydro-electric industry nation-wide could be considerable.

There are more than 500 other dams up for relicensing in the US; many are in the Pacific North-west and have been objects of campaigns by environmentalists.

The 900-foot-long Edwards Dam, outside the city of Augusta, in southern Maine, is 160 years old. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ruled that it should be removed to open a 19-mile stretch of the Kennebec River for salmon, bass and sturgeon entering from the ocean in search of spawning grounds.

"I think people are beginning to realise that a dam is not necessarily a permanent feature of the landscape," commented Alexander Hoar, a director at the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The owners of the dam, which provides only 1 percent of Maine's electricity supply, have one year to come forward with a plan for the structure's demolition. However, they are almost certain to appeal against the order.

— David Osborne, New York

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سكزا من الامم

17/PACIFIC RIFT

Fall from miracle to meltdown leaves Clinton facing the prospect of a new global divide

Time was when the United States feared they would fall to Communism. Now, the newly rich 'Tiger' economies of Asia could become 'dominoes' once again as worried investors withdraw their money and threaten them one by one with bankruptcy. This new domino effect could prove every bit as divisive as the last and shatter some American dreams to boot.

Five years ago, Bill Clinton became the first US president to attend the annual conference of the 18 economies known collectively as Apec - the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation grouping. Describing them as economies rather than nations got around the delicate problem of China's objections to Taiwan being treated as a sovereign country and the imminent reversion of Hong Kong to China.

But it also highlighted the primacy of economics over politics in a region where politics can be a sensitive subject. Unlike the European Union, Apec - formed in 1989 - set itself no longer-term political objective and stuck faithfully, if vaguely, to its brief of economic co-operation. Now, economics could prove its downfall.

This year, by coincidence, the summit was held in Vancouver, barely 50 miles into Canada from the US city of Seattle where President Clinton had presented the United States as a Pacific power and natural leader of the fearfully dynamic 'Pacific Rim'. But the mood was quite different. Then, Mr Clinton had looked forward with enthusiasm to a 'Pacific century', in which Asian dynamism would provide the engine for a new wave of global prosperity. This week, as his Secretary of State put it, rather more dramatically perhaps than Mr Clinton might have liked, there were fears that the 'Asian miracle' could become an 'Asian meltdown'.

Meltdown, probably, will be avoided. The United States has helped to arrange a series of IMF rescue packages that could serve the dual purpose of staving off bankruptcy in places as far apart as Indonesia and South Korea, and forcing economic and financial restructuring measures that would be very much to US tastes.

This week's Apec summit, however, saw cracks opening up between groups of APEC members that could eventually

thwart the whole US project for an America-style economic regime to the Pacific. US ambitions to lead the grouping were challenged by Asian calls for recognition of their special identity that cast doubt on the whole concept of the Pacific Rim as a geographic and economic entity. As if this was not enough, there were hints that a battle of ideology could soon be joined that was universally thought to have ended with the collapse of communism.

President Clinton went to Vancouver intent on preaching that the way out of the financial instability that has beset Asia's 'Tiger' economies in recent months lay through freer markets and sound national economic management. But he hit two snags. Deep-down, not all APEC countries accepted that IMF-style reforms offered a remedy for their problems. Some even mooted an 'Asian solution' that would be more flexible and consensus oriented than the fiscal rigour demanded by the IMF.

Although the US ensured that this suggestion came to nothing, Mr Clinton's qualifications as an advocate for the free market and the IMF were not what they

might have been. His free trade credentials were damaged by the refusal of Congress to give him 'fast-track' authority to negotiate international trade treaties. And even as he recommended troubled Asian countries to approach the IMF, the US was refusing - Congress again - to pay a \$3.5bn contribution to the Fund.

Worse, the countries experiencing the most acute economic difficulties - Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea - were the ones that followed the US model the most closely and had tied their currencies to the dollar. China, with an economy furthest from US practices in every respect, said with wry satisfaction that it was unaffected by the turmoil among its neighbours and expected to remain so.

The weakening of these US-orientated countries, whose political standing - like that of Japan - derived largely from their economic strength, could diminish not only their influence in the region, but also that of the United States. If the US economy continues to flourish, it could reorientate its investment in Asia to take advantage of weaker regional competition from Japan and South Korea, but this holds risks. It could force it to readjust its military priorities in the region; it could also accentuate the differences - political, economic and geographical - between North America, South America and Asia - the very differences that the Pacific Rim concept was supposed to blur.

No less difficult for the US are the questions that the Asian Tigers' problems raise about free-market capitalism and Western-style economic management. Korea, along with Thailand, has insisted that its current problems originated with an undisciplined private sector that over-borrowed and from a poorly regulated financial sector that left the government exposed.

Risk-taking in the private sector, however, lies at the heart of a free market. Taken to their logical conclusion, the complaints of South Korea and others lead to the position articulated most forcefully at Vancouver by the Malaysian prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad. Dr Mahathir, who has long propounded a theory of 'Asian values' - according to which Asians are deemed to value Western-style human rights less highly than government-fostered stability and economic growth - told business leaders that since the fall of communism, the pendulum was 'in danger of swinging too far and making market forces such an article of faith that anything done in its name cannot be questioned'.

Pursuing the crusade he launched after Malaysia fell victim to currency speculators earlier this year, he called for tough cross-border regulation of capital transfers and a new partnership between the private sector and governments. And in a tirade that provided a worthy follow-up to European complaints about unwarranted American 'economic triumphalism' at the Group of Seven summit this summer, Dr Mahathir said that suffering caused by recent South-East Asian currency devaluations was greater by far than the suffering caused by corruption and poverty before.

Attacking the power of unbridled markets, he said: 'As much as government can become corrupt when invested with absolute power, markets also can become corrupt when equally absolutely powerful. We see the effect of that absolute power today, the impoverishment and misery of millions of people and their eventual slavery.'

Dr Mahathir is often dismissed as a maverick. But with the wreckage of free markets strewn across Asia and still spreading, his views have a following that Washington may yet have to reckon with.

BY MARY DEJEVSKY



Waving or drowning? This stock market trader in Tokyo - and his fellows in 'Tiger' countries such as Malaysia and South Korea - have signalled both a financial and political problem for America. Photograph: AP

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The Royal Opera

The Royal Opera - 2 for 1 ticket offer - Save up to £75

The Independent and Independent on Sunday are giving you the opportunity to experience the opera. In association with The Royal Opera we are offering you 2 tickets for the price of 1 to the Autumn and Winter 1997/98 season. You can choose to see any of three productions - The Merry Widow, The Barber of Seville and Paul Bunyan all showing at the Shaftesbury Theatre.

How to Qualify

For each 2 for 1 ticket application simply collect 3 tokens from the Independent and Independent on Sunday (tokens will be printed every day until Friday 28 November) and telephone The Royal Opera House box office on either 0171 304 4000 or 0171 379 5399 (lines are open between 10am and 7pm) identifying yourself as an Independent reader. If paying by credit card you will be asked to hand in your tokens when you collect your tickets. If paying by cheque please enclose your three tokens (you will be advised of the address when booking). You may apply twice for the offer, collecting 3 tokens per application.

Paul Bunyan

Offer available 10 11 13 15 17 December
Ticket Prices: £48.50, £39, £36, £32, £18.50

Paul Bunyan is an American folk hero of gigantic height

The Merry Widow

Offer available 31 December 1 2 3 5 6 7 8 9 10 January
Ticket prices: £65, £58, £56, £51, £30.

Like The Barber of Seville, The Merry Widow is a first. Most operettas are about sex and money, but few as provocatively as Lehar's. The story takes place in the embassy circles in turn of the century Paris. It discusses the affairs of a romantic little prince who moved out of aristocratic circles into boulevard theatres. He believed his audiences would laugh at what they could recognise.

In this opera, Rossini has all the classic characters from commedia dell'arte; who have been around from Shakespeare to television sitcom.

The Barber of Seville

Offer available on 7 10 12 14 February
Ticket prices: £75, £66, £62, £57, £33.

The Barber of Seville is the first modern comic opera. Rossini was the star composer of an era when opera moved out of aristocratic circles into boulevard theatres. He believed his audiences would laugh at what they could recognise.

capism - usually. But what's best about the Widow is its realism. Its heroine has been married before for all the worst reasons - on the rebound from an unhappy affair, and for money. Its hero met the heroine before and rejected her for all the worst reasons - family pressure, and money - and then went off on a seriously naughty bender in Paris. He loves her, but can't bring himself to say it. Meanwhile, everyone else in sight is bending over backwards to be unfaithful. It's realistic, it's funny and it's sad. This perfect theatrical combination gave Lehar a monster hit in Vienna, Paris, London and New York.

Terms and Conditions

To qualify for the offer applicants must collect three differently numbered tokens. Tokens are published every day between November 22 and November 28. Only the tokens printed in The Independent and Independent on Sunday are valid. Photocopies or any other reproductions will not be accepted. The offer is for 2 tickets for the price of 1 for each application. Each set of three tokens collected allows you to take advantage of the 2 for 1 offer. The free ticket may only have a value equal to or less than the purchased ticket. This offer is only valid for the three productions mentioned above. The Royal Opera House standard terms and conditions of purchase apply to this offer. The offer is subject to availability. No cash alternatives will be accepted. The promoters are The Independent and The Royal Opera House.

THE INDEPENDENT

6

TOKEN

The Royal Opera

One night in Cardiff, one night in heaven

That was how it was for Serena Mackesy. For Tony Blair – and thousands of other M People fans – it could be one night in Wembley. And tonight's the night.

Despite the fact that the point of pop music, like any other profit-making business, is to shift as many units as possible, the taint of commercialism is hard to scrub off. M People may have been championing the use of real instruments and performance through the "Who Sings? Who Cares?" dance scene years, but there is one word with which they remain synonymous: Peugeot.

Not that they mind that much. The James Terminator Cameroon-directed ad that "Search for the Hero" accompanied (or was it the other way round?) was one of their smartest career moves. As Heather Small, the pint-sized soul diva whose voice has probably inspired more shouting on more dance floors than any other over the past six years, says, "It's the fact that the Peugeot ad was so successful that's the galling thing. But that's why you can't knock it."

"The first time it showed was during News at Ten on a Friday night, three minutes long," says Mike Pickering, the band's 41-

year-old Svengali. "I kept thinking, 'this is one of the best pop videos we've ever done'. We could never have got James Cameron for a video; they spent something like \$3m. And then it got resurrected because the one with Kim Basinger was so awful; all the dealers kept telling them to put ours back on. We got a few holidays out of that."

Plus mega-sales, of course. Bizarre Fruit, the album from which "Hero" came, charted for two-and-a-half years. Fresco, released on 13 October, is selling like hot cakes; "Fantasy Island", the single released on Monday, notched up advance orders of 64,000, and tonight M People hit Wembley in an 18-date arena tour for which 200,000 tickets have been sold. The Blairs are going to Wembley, apparently, darlings.

They are unlikely to go away disappointed; M People know how to put on a good show, and the spread of their audiences is remarkable. At Cardiff on Monday, the 7,000-strong crowd ranged from school children to pensioners. Gaggles of twentysomething women wore their hair piled up in imitation of Small and men with trimmed beards and serious tansures hugged plastic pint glasses to their chests. Everyone was there: cool kids and their grannies, people who dress to match their pit-bulls, wine bar devotees. Many had obviously

never been near the dance scene from which the band originated, but they were dancing their support-bases off on Monday. Egged on by the performers. The four-piece – Pickering, Small, Shovel and classically trained guitarist/key-boardist Paul Heard – kept the house rocking with the help of seven other musicians. "One Night in Heaven" appeared sixth in line and the election night theme tune, "Moving On Up", closed the set. "Search for the Hero" reduced the matron behind me to screams of delight, while the entire audience sang along, each wrapped in a conviction that the lyrics applied uniquely to themselves.

Key to it all was Small, who, despite a reputation for shyness and an aversion to self-publicity, stalked the stage like a tiger in a burr-patch, while Pickering performed Supremes-like band and hip movements by his microphone. Small is energetic, fierce and blessed with a voice straight from the darker recesses of the soul. Her volume, poise and control are hypnotic. So the Spice; if you want your daughter to have a good role model, start here.

Now, 32, Small paid her dues with the rated soul combo HotHouse before becoming one of Mike's people (that's what the "M" stands for) in 1991. Pickering, 41, has a music business pedigree that's hard to knock – spinning dance discs at the Hacienda in the glory days of Manchester; heading house outfits Quando Quango and T-Coy; A&R-ing for Factory Records and producing the Happy Mondays. Hardly an appearance from nowhere. And they are adept at managing themselves, playing the market, catching the wave of New Labour optimism and riding it all the way to shore.

Touring, though, is both strain and pleasure. Small, particularly, suffers badly from



M-people's Heather Small and Mike Pickering, catching the wave of New Labour optimism and riding it (by Peugeot) all the way to the shore Photograph: Tom Pilsdon

oerves before a show. "Going out on stage takes up a lot of my day. I have a routine, and I have to take time to be by myself to gear myself up. You have to focus, because however I wake up at 8.30am, come showtime I have to transcend those feelings and enjoy the show. If it's a good show," she adds, "I get an adrenaline rush." Pickering laughs. "You're like a woman possessed when you get out there. Her muscles ripple. She frightens me." Small cackles; for a tiny woman, her laugh could demolish walls.

She is vegan, teetotal, non-smoking – mostly for the sake of preserving that voice – and, with the exception of Shovel, who raises hell for all of them, all are more into their families than the party circuit. Pickering has a daughter at home and another on the way; James, Small's eight-month-old son by the Rugby star Shaun Edwards, is on tour with them. It's working out well. Small is amazingly cool about the whole thing, and Pickering is an enthusiastic extended family member. "It's great having James. It kind of makes up for missing my daughter, you know: you can have a great play with him. He gouges your eyes out and grabs on to your ears. He has got certain traits of his father you have to watch for. He'll be biting your nose off soon."

"I hate showbiz parties," says Pickering, "really hate them. I just think, well, I don't have to be your friend just because we're in the same business, and I find everyone is totally false at these parties, well, most people. We usually go and stand in a corner and have a laugh, and the odd person of the same nature will come and stand with us." They confess to enjoying the recent Downing Street party where they met Mike Leigh, a great hero, and got to see the rest of the house. Heather generally sticks to

home in Maida Vale, occasionally popping down to Ladbroke Grove, where she grew up. "They're really nice to me there. They've seen my career, and they're just glad that a local girl's made good. It's very, very busy, you know, but it's nice to go there and visit."

If there's one thing they hate more than showbiz parties, it's the critics. "Their attitude didn't really change when we got the Peugeot ad; they hated us all the time. There are exceptions, but the more popular we got the more they disliked us," says Pickering the next day in the hotel, hung over from post-gig partying but still fresh from a heavy workout in the gym. The band have been called manufactured, cynical, mainstream elevator music, "calculated soul charlatans".

"Musicians in Britain, every one of them, are all in despair about the critics. A lot of them don't even come and see us play live," says Small. This must be a sharp thorn in the side of someone who can match live version with the recorded one every day of the week. "Our inspiration comes from people like James Brown," says Pickering. "All the old soul artists, the dance acts, used to play live; I used to go and see them all. At the moment there are a lot of people going around with DATs, [Digital Audio Tapes] even at lot of the big shows. Sometimes it's necessary, of course. The Spice Girls have a 40-track ooe at the back with all their vocals on, and they quickly fade them out so they can go 'thank you'."

"I'd find it soul-destroying to go out there and know that night after night it's going to be exactly the same," Heather continues. "There can be times on stage when all the musicians are in synch, and you do something that is so magical, and the audience realise it, and you realise it, and you're all in on it, and that's what you aim for."

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My lovely husband is a monster behind the wheel



DILEMMAS
VIRGINIA
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What is it about men and cars? Level-headed, kindly men can turn into maniacs when they get behind a wheel. I recently drove with one of the calmest, sweetest men in the world, and found myself quietly resolving, between praying to God for deliverance, that if I ever arrived home in one piece I would finally ring up my solicitor and make my will. Just in case.

Tailgating, flashing their lights at cars who won't move over, overtaking on hills ("I just know that nothing's coming"), parking at bus-stops, backing down one-way streets if not actually driving down them, doing spectacular U-turns on motorways – I've suffered all of these at the hands of male drivers.

It's terribly easy to put it all down to stupidity and childishness, and also to account for their inability to ask the way as a sign of an almost pathological weakness when it comes to asking for help. But I think it's about innate masculinity. These days men may help with the washing-up, put the rubbish out, discuss their feelings, and even cry, but when it comes to cars they feel the call of the wild; the hooter comes out in them, and you can no more stop it than you can stop the rosiest, fastest, purr-est old cat chasing after birds.

The inability to ask for help is not a weakness in that it's a fear of dependence; rather, it's a great desire for independence. A man would no

more ask a local the way, than a primitive hunter would ask his mate which way the deer went. They have to find out for themselves. They only feel happy if they can do it alone; they like to orientate themselves with maps and an innate sense of direction (meo are generally meant to have a better sense of direction than women). And perhaps they feel the need to prove themselves, rather than condemn.

There are lots of things that women do that men can't understand. They traditionally speed ages getting dressed, fussing about their hair, getting anxious about the size of their thighs, asking nervously whether they look OK.

Meo often find this preoccupation quite extraordinary, and, sometimes, maddening. But it's a sign of femininity that they go along with fairly tolerantly, despite the fact that it's a mystery to them.

Hannah and her husband should work out the routes long before they get into the car.

If they are visiting a stately home, Hannah should ring up the house first and find out exactly where it is. She should be armed with full instructions how to get there – and from every direction – so that she can become her husband's navigator and they can work as a team. She should contribute information – such as how many miles it is to the next village – all of which will make him feel

more in control and less angry. If she tends to confuse left with right, she should write a little L on her left thumb and an R on her right so that she over gets her directions wrong. The more trust her husband can put in his navigator, the less likely he is to drive too fast. They should leave plenty of time for a journey, to take any urgency out of it.

And if it reassures Hannah, she will know from our letters that she's not alone. Eevo royalty is not immune. One of the Queen's recent biographers quoted an eyewitness account of Prince Philip's threat to put his wife out of the car if she once more voiced her fears that he was driving too fast.

WHAT READERS SAY

This could be me
I read your "next week's dilemma" of 20 November rather expecting to see my wife's name at the end of it!

I cannot explain why I change so much just by getting behind the wheel of a car. This coming Sunday we have to travel to the other side of London to collect some furniture and I will, as before, set off determined not to get annoyed with other drivers, or Lynda's comments such as "next left, no right, oo, left... I think".

Lynda and I really enjoy travelling to places I know the way to.

I can assure Hannah that she is not alone – and if she sees a red Fiat Punto indicating left, then right, then left again, she'll know it's us.

David Buck
Woodford Bridge, Essex

My husband changed

I, too, have the most wonderful husband who has always been generous and considerate, kind and loving – until he got behind the wheel of a car, when he used to become an ag-

gressive man who terrified us, and whom the children and I hardly recognised. Going anywhere was a nightmare, when all our stomachs turned over. The very thought of his driving took all the pleasure out of going on holiday – and it went on for years. We tried reasoning, pleading, the lot – but failed to make him understand how we felt.

I finally had enough, and bought my own car, after which my mother, children, even friends always wanted to go with my car and not his; but he still couldn't understand why we were so distressed, although he would not have dreamt of distressing us in any other way.

Then I was very ill and almost died, and he changed completely and is now the most careful and considerate of drivers. It took a frightening experience and something very big to change him.

I have been very lucky; usually, I'm sure, you're on to a loser trying to change this type of driver.
M Bowen
Haydon Bridge
Northumberland

Why not go by train?

What earthly point is there in embarking on a motoring jolly if your husband is going to ruin the day with his bad temper and potentially fatal attacks of road rage? Next time, Hannah, insist that you both travel by train or coach. However nice, intelligent, funny and kind your husband may be, he is a potential danger to himself and, more important, to you and other road users. In addition, you will have the bonus

of knowing that by not using your car you will be contributing less to the damaging effects of pollution on these historic buildings that you enjoy visiting at weekends.
Julia Sellers
London W1

He's just a male driver...
I believe that what you are describing here is not necessarily a dark side of your husband's otherwise gentle character, but simply a facet of many male

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

My boyfriend and I have been going out together for five years and he has oow asked me to give up my flat and live with him. It's an obvious progression in our relationship, but for some reason I feel rather alarmed by it. I often stay at his flat and he stays at mine, but living together seems such a big move. It's not as if he's asked me to marry him – we obviously will someday, I feel – so I don't know why I feel in-

stinctive trepidation at the idea. I like Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from Interflora. Send your personal experiences or comments to me at the features department, 'The Independent', 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (fax 0171-293 2182) by Tuesday morning. And if you have a dilemma of your own that you would like to share, please let me know.

personalities all round the country. By saying that he is intelligent and has never had an accident, you imply that he is probably quite a good driver. If one is allowed to be sexist here, a car is probably, after his family and house, a man's most prized possession, and how he drives it is extremely important.

Many men have immense pride in their ability to drive well. To ask a pedestrian for advice is, in his eyes, admitting defeat, and compromising his skills as a superior driver. With regard to being bad tempered with other drivers, this is not road rage, but merely extreme frustration at their not doing what he would do, and holding everyone up in the process. Driving is without doubt a stressful business, and your husband obviously feels it more keenly than some.

My suggestion is that you try to play relaxing music in the car, and talk about things other than the journey. I cannot draw any parallels with female habits and behaviour, but men are equally surprised at the amount of stress from which a woman suffers over her

hair, make-up etc. This appears to a man pointless and stupid; as the driving stress appears to a woman. We are all made up differently, and if, all the rest of the time he is kind and gentle, there is nothing really abnormal.

Simon Blackburn
Bungay, Suffolk

Confront your husband
Hannah should show her husband the letter she sent to Virginia and the state quite simply that she will refuse to go out with him in the car as long as he behaves in the way she describes. When friends and relations ask questions because she refuses to let him drive her, she should tell them the truth. I expect that he will find that embarrassing.

I believe that psychologists regard such masculine behaviour as evidence of immaturity and at the root of the modern phenomenon called road rage. Like many women, I regard such behaviour as puerile and would refuse to pander to such tantrums.
Mrs Heward
Homecastle, Lincolnshire

The Mil

One Smith, the culture secretary yesterday, asked over the lease of Somerset House to the charity charged with saving the former building records office from birth, deaths and marriages to its 19th-century glory.

Bridge Correspondent. The River Teese was shut off for 150 years – and the vaulted rooms used to house some makes collections.

THE INDEP

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19/ARCHITECTURE

THE INDEPENDENT
THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER 1997
19

The Millennium comes to Somerset House

Chris Smith, the culture secretary, yesterday handed over the lease for Somerset House to the charity charged with restoring the former London records office for births, deaths and marriages to its 18th-century glory.

Stephen Goodwin, Heritage Correspondent, toured the River Terrace – shut off for 150 years – and the vaulted rooms intended to house some fabulous collections.

In a near-Dickensian scene, a dozen or so inquirers – or perhaps gold diggers – are standing at desks, leafing through registers of wills. This is the Seamen's Hall, the room where, in Nelson's day, sea captains would go and wait for their commissions. The desks and dusty ledgers were later arrivals and will soon be gone as the Hall and the whole of Somerset House's south side is transformed.

With the aid of a £10m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, announced yesterday, Somerset House is to be restored and large parts of it opened to the public. Lying between the Strand and the Thames, it is one of the most important 18th century public buildings in London, yet its vast quadrangular Great Court and grand facades have remained a virtual secret.

Sir Tim Sainsbury, chairman of Somerset House Ltd, the charity established to take over responsibility for the building from the Government, described the Great Court as "the finest open air living room in London". In a £15m redevelopment programme the Trust intends to open routes through Somerset House linking Covent Garden and the South Bank, bring open-air theatre and other entertainments to the Great Court and install three major collections in vaults, where the nation's wills were stored.

Somerset House is the masterpiece of George III's architectural adviser, Sir William Chambers. His monumental building replaced a palace which from the time of James I had been home to successive

royal dowagers. Queen Charlotte refused to live there and the King had it demolished to make way for government offices, mainly for tax collectors and the Navy.

The Inland Revenue are still there, and will pay rent of £2m a year for their offices in the east and west wings. But the taxmen's cars, along with those of Lord Chancellor's staff, will be cleared from the Great Court by next summer.

For the architects, Peter Inskip and Peter Jenkins, the challenge is to take an abused 18th century Grade I listed building alongside a dirty, noisy six-lane highway, interpret its space and install modern services appropriate to displaying and conserving valuable art collections. Air conditioning is crucial.

The centrepiece will be the £75m collection of silver, gold, micro-mosaics and marble inlays and gold boxes given to the nation by Arthur Gilbert, a British-born resident of California. Ranging from Ancient Rome to the Great Exhibition of 1851, many of the pieces once belong to popes, kings, queens and grand dukes. Gold boxes, such as the fabulous diamond-encrusted rococo boxes made for Frederick the Great, are set with precious stones.

Also bound for the south wing are the 800 works of Wernher Collection from Luton Hoo in Bedfordshire, including medieval ivories and Renaissance bronzes. The Courtauld Institute of Art's gallery in the north wing of Somerset House will re-open next autumn after a £2.5m restoration programme. However it will still be short of space and eventually 70 famous Impressionist and Post-Impressionist pictures could be found a home on the south side.

Along with a car-free Great Court, one of the most exciting prospects will be the opening to the public of 480-foot Terrace Walk – painted by Canaletto – overlooking the Thames. Beneath its dismal asphalt roof is the Embankment building, which in George III's time stood out into the river. The building became landlocked with Sir Joseph Bazalgette's great engineering works along the Embankment, but the arched Water Gate and adjacent barge houses are still there in the building, awaiting restoration in a later phase.



Winners ancient and modern: Somerset House, top (photo: David Rose), the Millennium Centre in Dagenham, above (photo: Philip Meech)

LOTTERY WINNERS AND LOSERS

It is, after all, a lottery. With what other truism can the River and Rowing Museum Foundation comfort themselves today as they contemplate a £4m hole in their plans to celebrate the jolly boating life?

Work is almost complete on the museum building at Henley, the Thameside home of rowing. Designed by David Chipperfield, the modern, timber-clad "up-turned boat" building has won acclaim and may have helped the architect secure his major commission to design the £100m Neues Museum for Berlin.

The HLF does not disclose why it rejects particular applications but said the museum sector was "heavily oversubscribed". Jonathan Bryant, the museum chief executive, said: "We certainly felt down but are definitely not out. We have to make every effort to secure other funds to open this museum during 1998 as planned."

The museum's collection is taking shape, and includes the 1874 Thames steam launch Eva, a 2,000-year old log boat and the coxless pair in which Olympic champions Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent won gold at the 1996 Atlanta games.

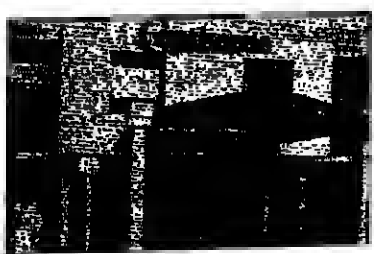
Included among the HLF winners were 41 churches and places of worship, which together got £3.5m towards restoration. Banbury Museum, Oxfordshire, is to get £2.2m for purpose-built galleries; Abbey House Museum, Leeds, will get £1.6m to conserve the medieval gateway of Kirkstall Abbey while adding a new gallery; £800,000 will help restore the historic Brooklands Motoring Village in Surrey; and £1.6m towards Sir Norman Foster's Great Court Scheme at the British Museum was re-confirmed.

Money was also promised "in principle" to projects including the new National Maritime Museum Cornwall on the waterfront at Falmouth. Architects Long & Kentish, in collaboration with exhibition designers Land Design Studios, plan a building with "its feet in the harbour" allowing the tide and wind into the galleries.

Stephen Goodwin

THE INDEPENDENT

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Close your eyes and think of Dagenham

The Millennium Centre embodies many of the qualities that win hearts, minds and lottery money these days. And, reports Norie Niesewand, it has been duly rewarded.

Mention Dagenham and the mind turns to endless images of cars rolling off the assembly line. The Ka, with its saucy little bumpers spinning out of Ford. Convoys of trucks. Exhaust fumes. Not a nature park with marshlands and butterflies, bees and trees. Yet just three miles down the road, the Millennium Centre opened yesterday to show off exhibits of flora and fauna and highlight all the local wildlife and flowers that have returned to reclaimed land around this ecologically sound little educational centre.

The plan by Dagenham and Barking Council is to introduce the locals to everything that nature – with a bit of help from the council – has restored in their gravel pits. Filled in with leftover rubble from the bombing of London, trashed with rubbish over decades, the former dump turned into country parklands in the early Nineties. Landscapers moved earth to make undulating parklands, sealed off toxic soil with membranes and then layered it with soil, sown with wild flower grassland mixes. Now there is a great variety of wildlife in the chemical-free eight-hectare site of Eastbrookend and the adjacent anglers' favourite spot, the Chase Nature Reserve. More than 50,000 trees were planted, which means that Arctic birds

put down their landing gear there.

So the council decided to build a visitor centre for an educational programme on the environment and to house their rangers, who look after the park and take nature walks. The total cost is £770,000. Over 1,500 school children who visited the park, without any shelter if it rained, or any place in work, helped to secure the grant of £360,000 from the Millennium Commission. Chief executive Eric Sorenson called it "an innovative project, an excellent resource for local schools as well as complementing the new park". The centre plans to stage special exhibitions. In the diary already are a National Tree Week, Energy Conservation Week and National Wildlife Week.

Naturally, the building had to be environmentally sound with all those nature lovers about. "We designed it to touch the ground lightly," say architects Penoyre and Prasad, who won the competition. So lightly that it doesn't have any foundations. Concrete foundations disturb the landfill on reclaimed land, so the two-storeyed timber building, with its ground-floor exhibition centre, just pierces the ground with steel-bladed screw-in earth anchors. If future generations want to get rid of the building, those foundations unscrew and the building comes down in sections, leaving no trace.

A solar-powered street lamp doesn't need underground cabling either. Looking like a lectern, the tilted solar panel collects sunlight and stores it in batteries until dusk. Then it releases that energy as light. It's the first of its kind and will be

miniatured by Showers Solar UK, who donated the lamp to the Millennium Centre. All the electricity for the building is powered by wind turbines.

The architects wanted the building to be friendly and low-tech looking. And contextual, that buzz word for architects, which means that in this case it had to look eco-chic. More barn than boat. So they used wood for the surfaces and a corrugated metal roof to retain a barn-like appearance. Stairs housed in a funnel clad in Douglas fir caused early visitors on site to think a football stadium was going up.

The architects are particularly proud of the materials they used. Masonite beams made of off-cuts of wood glued into a strong composite are a cheaper way of building in big spans, carrying heavy weights. Like a hard-board rib with two softwood panels stiffened top and bottom, "it works the same way as a sheet of paper. If you stand paper up on its edge it's stronger than lying it flat", they say.

It's the kind of project that is dear to the Millennium Commission chairman, Chris Smith. He likes the idea of anything that gives a community a sense of civic pride, and anything to do with the environment. Add education to the list and you see why they will hold it up as an example of sustainable technology in action.

One of the frustrations of being a commissioner ready to review projects and hand out lottery money for buildings is that they couldn't solicit applications. Everyone who applied had to prove that they had public support and aimed to serve the community in some way. The themes that emerged

are environmental and community-based projects.

So this Dagenham environmental visitor centre is a good example of lottery money funding. Even better, it is opening no time and in budget – one of the first 10 lottery-funded projects nationwide.

It also highlights the difficulties some of the other Millennium Commission projects are facing. Too ambitious in their proposals, they have had to match 50:50 any lottery money they are given before breaking ground. That means appealing to private sponsors and funding bodies. Some have a building designed by the famous name architect but not enough money to get it off the drawing board. Others are worrying over filling these lottery-funded buildings with interesting contents, and then maintaining them. All style, not enough content has come to dog a few of the really big players. Even Nicholas Serota had to go on a sponsorship-funding programme in the US to help raise money for the new Tate at Bankside.

In the third and final phase of Millennium Commission handouts, Eric Sorenson announced that there is some money in the pot (he refused to be drawn on how much) for the Commission to review some projects and sort them out. Undoubtedly they will look carefully at model projects like this one in Dagenham. Not least because that overworked word Millennium means little more than a deadline.

Free public open days: Saturday 29, and Sunday 30 Nov, at the Millennium Centre, The Chase, Dagenham.

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Time to unfasten the seatbelts and set your children free



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To be young, in 1997, is to be safer than at any previous time in recorded history. Safer, that is, in the sense of not being likely to die - is there any measure more absolute than that? Childhood is safer because of medical advances and improvements in public health. It is also safer because children have fewer fatal accidents, a third as many as when Ted Heath was Prime Minister.

It follows that a lot of parental fear and anxiety is mistaken. Among the reasons is the role played by the British newspaper press; media-instigated fear of crime seems to be exaggeratedly high here compared with other countries. Parents' perceptions matter hugely in the way children are brought up. Jackie Lang of the Girls' Schools Association made the case yesterday for stepping back. Parents, she argued, need to let children breathe a bit, make a few mistakes. She is right.

This is not to try and capture some prelapsarian idyll when, like Richard Compton's William, we could wander out in the meadows, sash around in ditches, stuff frogs in our trouser pockets. It is true that, a generation ago, children played on largely empty streets which are now busy with cars. But it is also a fact that opportunities for physical activity for children have expanded enormously, from urban playgrounds, to clubs in and out of school catering for all manner of specialist interests. Turning children out of doors to play is neither to subject them to the depredations of drug dealers nor to see them fall under the wheels of juggernauts.

We do not live in an urban jungle. Wicked predators do not wait outside every school or linger by every playground. Of course parents must be alert, but paedophilia is not epidemic. Child homicide of any kind, let alone the bru-

ality of the attack on Kate Bushell, is very, very rare.

As for traffic accidents, United Kingdom children are three times less likely to die on the roads than 30 years ago, and the UK record makes it just about the safest country in the European Union for children. The most dangerous place for all children was, and will always be, in their own homes; and the most likely sources of violence against them lie within the sacred family.

Mrs Lang did not of course recommend that parents let their offspring roam free from dawn to dusk. She made her point by reference to rainwear. Why, she asked, do so few of her charges possess raincoats? Because they are delivered and picked up by car. From door to door, they rarely feel the rain on their skin. Fair enough, Mrs Lang educates the middle classes, who can afford the car journeys. But her point nevertheless applies more

generally. Up and down the social structure, parents are tempted into over-protectiveness. They impose on their children regimes which cosset and insulate them. Intending to minimise risk to their children, they may end up depriving them of the chance to learn for themselves, to make their own risk assessments. No amount of GCSE maths can teach children the calculus of probability that they will need to apply, sooner or later, in their own lives.

Youth is surrounded by temptation, often compounded by ignorance. The United Kingdom is relatively safe for children on the roads, but it is a dangerous place between the sheets, on the sofa, or in the neighbourhood park: we have one of the highest rates for conceptions by under-16 girls in the EU. That, and high rates of sexually transmitted disease, reflect in part the failure of parents and schools to supply basic information. It may also

speaking about a wider failure to apportion risk. The newspapers (to name a prime mover in moral panics) and other media propagate the idea that sex is risk-free, while harping on the dangers of walking the neighbours' dog. The world out there is dangerous but many of its pitfalls are emotional. We spend far too much time protecting children from life, and far too little preparing them for its traps and pitfalls.

The messages given to children are often so imbalanced that it is no wonder their scale of values is warped. Never take addictive drugs - unless they are sanctioned by advertising, the Prime Minister and parents. Never have unprotected sex - but when was the last time you saw or read about the messy business of condom-wearing? We could do better, as parents or would-be parents. And we could make a start, where Mrs Lang recommends, by lightening up.

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Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

LETTERS

Deer hunting

Sir: Due to pressure from a vulnerable minority, however sizeable, deer hunting has been banned on National Trust land. We were warned that this might lead to the reduction of deer numbers by other methods, notably shooting ("Bloody revenge for stag hunt ban", 25 November). We were even told why, but we chose to ignore the facts.

Grass feeds sheep and cattle, which are a cash crop; this business is called farming and provides an income, usually small, for a number of hard-working people in rural areas. These farmers nurture their grass through the spring, summer and autumn to provide feed for their animals during the winter. The deer eat this grass.

The culling of half the stag population in the Quantock Hills at this time of year is not a slaughter, it is a wise precaution to reduce the number of deer next year. This was not indiscriminate slaughter of hinds and young deer; their chance of reproducing, however, has been lessened. By removing the stags before the breeding season starts (next spring), and before the sheep and cattle have to be brought down from the uplands to their winter grazing areas, there will be more food for all the animals.

This act is not revenge, it is economics. Deer may be pretty and feature as red-nosed darlings on Christmas cards but they can have a serious impact on the rural economy on a localised scale, something that has been largely ignored in favour of more emotive issues.

DAVID LUARD
London NW10

Sir: Whilst we have warned of the consequences of the National Trust's removal, at a stroke, of the system that has ensured a constant and healthy herd of red deer on the Quantocks for the past 90 years, we have been surprised and shocked by the speed and size of the cull by farmers no longer prepared to tolerate the damage to their crops.

For the sake of the deer, I implore the Chairman of the National Trust, Charles Nunn, to take up the compromise (allowing hounds to cross Trust land whilst further scientific research is carried out) offered to the Trust by the West Country staghounds shortly before the last council meeting.

which he apparently did not even put to his council at the time. Even at this late stage, I believe the National Trust can save what is left of our fine herd.

In the meantime I appeal to farmers on the Quantocks to halt the cull in the hope that the National Trust (and the Forestry Commission) will act in the next few days to allow the existing deer management system to once again work effectively.

NIGEL MUERS RABY
Chairman
Quantock Staghounds
Taunton, Somerset

Sir: I was appalled by the actions of farmers in Devon "protecting their crops". It is a fair assumption that deer will always have ventured on to these farmers' land and that until the ban on hunting imposed by the National Trust, the damage done to crops by these animals was tolerated. Now the animals can no longer be the victims of their barbarous play, farmers are

viewing them as simply another (windfall) cash crop.

This merely serves to emphasise the moral bankruptcy of hunt supporters and the opportunistic greed of many in our farming community.

STANLEY TYRER
Bury, Lancashire

Sir: If there is no hunting, deer become just another pest to farmers. Let us at least draw a lesson from this tragedy; if other forms of hunting are banned, many of the copses, hedgerows, ancient grasslands and other such habitats which farmers currently preserve and maintain because of hunting would become an expensive irrelevance.

THOMAS ROCHFORD
Birmingham

Sir: With reference to the report which claimed to show stress levels suffered by deer when chased... what else would you expect? The animal is in fear of its life. Huntsmen are in-

roducing no greater level of cruelty than that which nature has supplied. There are people who wish to reintroduce wolves to prey on the red deer, in order to restore our natural heritage. Do you think the deer will spot the difference?

WILLIAM PETRIE
Forres, Moray

Museum charges

Sir: In the next few weeks our major national museums are going to be making crucial decisions which will affect public access for many millions ("Don't end one of our few great Enlightenment legacies", 26 November).

Museums are being told not to look to the public purse but rather to turn to shops and supermarkets to learn how to find the extra income they desperately need. The logical conclusion of this argument is that museums should expect no public funding at all, competing in

the visitor attraction market. Museums would be obliged to charge more and more as their funding reduced, inevitably deterring the less well-off.

The alternative is to reaffirm our national commitment - a commitment we have cherished from generation to generation - to fund our national collections properly. This commitment matters not only as an inclusive ideal - that the nation's treasures should be free for all, rich and poor - but also for its economic benefits to the creative industries, to cultural tourism, and to lifelong learning.

CHRISTOPHER NAYLOR
The Earl of CLANCARTY
JAN WOOLF
JENNIFER EDWARDS
HILARY GREYSTY
The Campaign for Free Admissions
London NW6

Sir: In a realistic world, there is a fair, flexible and moderate path between free entry to museums

and the high fixed charges which deter "pop-in" visitors.

The system which works admirably for car parking - take a ticket on entry, pay on exit - must surely be adaptable for museums and galleries. The scale of charges would reflect the amount of time the visitor stays, starting with a nominal amount, perhaps as little as 50p, for up to half an hour.

This system would require investment in ticket and payment machines, but the high level of automation would reduce the ongoing costs of selling tickets personally. As a bonus, it could provide useful and reliable management information.

PATRICIA SMITH
London SW1

Sir: To argue (26 November) that the Elgin Marbles belong to us is unacceptable. We are stewards of the marbles at present, but we have no rights of ownership. While the British government paid Lord Elgin

for them almost 200 years ago, Elgin himself took them from the Parthenon without the approval of the Greeks and without having paid for them. He simply had a note giving him permission issued by an official of the occupying Ottoman administration. The Marbles belong in Athens, however much we love them.

ROB BUSH
London N5

Poor law

Sir: Guy Carless is right to question (Letters, 26 November) the right of US citizens to settle freely in Colchester, when Slovakian gypsies are sent to prison whilst their asylum applications are processed. The reason for the difference is money. It has always been apparent that immigration laws only apply to the poor.

The Rev PETER M HAWKINS
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

Single parents

Sir: May I, in connection with the row about restricting payments to single parents ("Labour revolt threatened over cut in lone-parent benefit", 21 November), make an outrageous suggestion?

I think single parents should be split into two categories, the deserving and the not so deserving. Single parents who are so because their partners have died or left them (after having committed themselves in the first place to sharing parenthood, either by marriage or otherwise) should receive state support sufficient to let them decide whether they want to work or stay at home to look after their children.

Single parents who are so through choice or carelessness should be expected to work, provided (and this is a big "but") the government can set up a nationwide properly funded and organised system of child care.

I am very willing to have my taxes used to support the first category, who are single parents through no choice of their own. But why should I support women who decide to have babies without the means or the partners to support them?

LYNNE REID BANKS
Beaminster
Dorset

Health warning

Sir: You report that Peter Mandelson and the food industry have been arguing that the Food Standards Agency should concentrate on safety, rather than nutrition (24 November).

In the long run, aren't they the same thing? Poor nutrition means early death - sounds unsafe to me.

TERRY GILBERT
Ipswich, Suffolk

Faith in superstition

Sir: Peter Banks says (Letters, 25 November) that he is not surprised that churches in this country are in decline, given that clergy give public credence to "superstitions belonging to the dark ages". Forgive me, but isn't that what priests are for?

MARK JYNS-MON
London N3

How to be a card this Christmas - and look like a complete turkey



MILES KINGTON

A Christmas Story
One day Henry Trapp said to his wife Mary: "Are we going to send any cards this year?"

He said this every year as Christmas came over the horizon like a dinosaur.

It was a signal for his wife to say, as she always did: "I'd love not to."

In reply to this he always said: "Me, too. But there are some people we really have to send cards to."

To which she always said: "Well, some, perhaps. Far-flung relations and old friends, for example. But the idea of delivering cards by hand to all our neighbours is just too revolting... The commercialisation of Christmas has just got out of hand. And we all go along with it the whole time!"

This was the same conversation they had every year. You too, dear reader, have probably had it too, and then sighed deeply and got down to the business of doing your cards. But at this point in the Trapp household the conversation took a sharp new turn, for Henry Trapp said:

"Well, this year I'm not going to send any cards to the locals. Or anyone. Instead, I'm going to hire a sandwich board man!"

"You're what?"
"I'm going to hire a sandwich board man to march up and down the locality with a message saying 'HENRY TRAPP WISHES EVERYONE A HAPPY CHRISTMAS IN 1997 AND WILL NOT BE SENDING CARDS THIS YEAR.'"

Mary thought about it for a moment. On the one hand, it was inexpressibly vulgar. On the other hand, it was a great idea, as long as she didn't have to do it.

"Could you make that 'Mr and Mrs Henry Trapp'?" she said.

"Of course," said Henry, and went off to inquire about hiring a sandwich board man. Unfortunately, they were all hired out already, it being Christmas, but he managed to hire a spare sandwich board, and decided to wear it himself. He painted the sign with his seasonal message of greeting and went out in the streets of his village to walk up and down for a half hour or so every day, long enough to get the message over and to exercise the dog.

On the third day, he was stopped by a Mr Herbert Manners, whom he knew slightly.

"This message of yours..." said Mr Manners.

"Yes?" said Henry Trapp, tensing slightly. He had half-expected to meet an enraged Christian sooner or later, who might accuse him of sacrilege, or possibly a local parish councillor who would insist that a sandwich board would need planning permission...

"I couldn't help noticing that the back of the board is blank," said Mr Manners. "Any chance you could carry Christmas wishes from Mr and Mrs Manners as well?"
"Yes, but it will cost you," said Mr Trapp cheerfully. They settled on a fixed rate of £20 for the inclusion of the

Manners' Christmas greeting, which, as Mr Trapp said, sounded a lot, but would hardly buy a dozen good quality cards these days...

During the next week or so Henry was approached by several other customers, until he had to redesign the notice to get them all in. "Happy Christmas greetings from Mr and Mrs Henry Trapp, Mr and Mrs Manners, Mrs Harrison the florist, and so on."

Then the vicar approached him in the street.

Henry's heart sank.
"Morning, Mr Trapp," said the vicar pleasantly. "Is this Christmas advertising parade of yours going to last much longer?"
"Well," said Henry cautiously, "a few more days, I

thought..."
"Good," said the vicar. "In that case I wondered if I might add a note to your board about the times of the Christmas services in the church, and a display feature about the Carol Service on Dec 18th?"

For a moment, Henry was tempted to allow the vicar to post his announcement free, but commercial sense prevailed just in time and he charged him a flat £40. Taking advertising was just the breakthrough that he needed, and after the vicar's announcement had been accepted he also took ads from the village shop ("Low, low prices for spirits!"), the village pub ("Special Turkey Business Lunch!"), the seasonal visit of the Morris dancers and also of the mums, who were in fact the

Morris dancers in another guise. "We've had a lot fewer cards this year," said Mary Trapp.

"Good," said Henry.

"Aren't you a bit sad about it?"

"Not when you think that I've made a couple of hundred quid out of my campaign against Christmas cards already," said Henry. "Christmas cards have been very good to me this year."
"Don't you think it's a bit odd," said Mary Trapp, "that this all started as a protest against the commercialisation of Christmas? And now you're making money out of the protest? What are you going to do next year?"
"Expand," said Henry, getting up to go out to the shed, where he had already started work on making his own sandwich boards.

سنة ١٤١٨

21/COMMENT

Just imagine, the earl and the loofah. It's all terribly surreal

JOHN WALSH



It's hard to say whether the Earl Spencer divorce case is working out as comedy or tragedy, but it's certainly packing in a lot of amusement value. You could hear a collective gasp of outrage across the metropolis when the papers reported the view of "expert witness" Jeremy Posnansky that, for a settlement of £300,000, Lady Spencer would be able to afford only "a house in a very unattractive distant suburb with problems such as crime". Everybody who recently paid £300,000 for a Charming, Four-Bedroomed, South-Facing, Crime-Free Home, Handy for Shops and Underground Station could be heard demanding, "Oll! What's wrong with Shepherd's Bush/Clapham Common/Muswell Hill then?"

More obviously rebarbative was the suggestion by Lord Spencer's brief, Leslie Weinkove, that her ladyship shouldn't be entrusted with a settlement of £3.75m because she might not look after it properly ("There is a question mark over her ability to manage such an award, given that she has a 12-step approach to life"). Poor Victoria may be a recovering alcoholic, but it does not, presumably, stop her hiring a financial adviser. More alarming is the implication that Mr Weinkove regards a cash award as if it were some kind of small child, in danger of neglect and abuse.

I confess to a shameful fascination with this case, even down to the public displays of insouciance: how, one day, the earl is "laughing and joking" with his advocates while his wife is grim-faced; the next, they've swapped roles, and she is having uproarious fun with one of the earl's ex-squeezes, while he is looking tense. Are they taking it in turns? Is it all being stage-managed by the shadowy Mr Weinkove?

The scene that most sticks in the mind, however, is that business in the bathroom. According to his wife, his lordship was actually lying in the marital bath when he explained to her that she was a hopeless wife and a crap mother, that he had found someone else and wanted a divorce. He did all this, let me remind you, while lying supine, naked, pink, hideously complacent and spectacularly vulnerable in a lot of warm water. How many female readers of these sordid details have, I wonder, become lost in silent contemplation of what they might have done with (handily adjacent) nailbrush, loofah, aerosol can, plastic duck and freezing cold shower head attachment?

Fun and games in Cork Street on Tuesday evening, when George Melly and a couple of hundred groovy chums piled into the Mayor Gallery to celebrate the launch of his

book *Don't Tell Sybil*, the story of his encounter with the British wing of the European Surrealist movement, and in particular its leading light, ELT Mesens, the Belgian collage artist (Melly had a brief affair with him and his wife). The place was full of ephibic young men, with black and white mohair coats and hungry eyes. Everywhere you went, the S-word kept turning up. "This conversation is getting terribly surreal," people assured each other, even though they'd done little more than remark on the clemency of the November evenings. The evergreen artist Harry Blacker, now 88, remembered meeting André Breton, the proto-Surrealist, in Paris in 1934. Breton offered him an odd-looking painting of a nude with drawers (the other sort) protruding from her limbs. It was by an unknown Hispanic called S Dali. The price was £50. "I couldn't afford it," says Blacker, aghast at what he had missed. "It represented ten weeks' salary". In the corridor, Julian Mitchell, the playwright and *Inspector Morse* scribe, explained to Maggie Hambling why he had two black/orange eyes and a lot of sticking plaster on his nose. An operation for skin cancer, apparently brought on by too much Mediterranean sun. "I blame it on the Somerset Maugham Award I got 30 years ago," he raged, "and their stipulation that you have to spend it abroad." Beside us, a breathless blonde in black sequins scrutinised one of ELT Mesens's famous collages, this one a mixed-media symphony of faded newspaper, purple paint and autumn leaves. "Oh it's all newspaper," she said, disappointed. "From a distance, it looked like silk. I thought, what a good pattern that would make for a pair of leggings..." Jolly surreal.

The artist-patron relationship has always been a little fraught. One side supplies the cash and the condescension, the other does the creativity and the gratitude. It's never going to be a smooth and happy business. But one can only guess at the chronicle of supplication, hope, rejection and tears that lies behind the hushed "Acknowledgement" in Lucy Ellmann's new novel, *Man or Mango*, published next spring. It reads: "The author wishes to make clear that she did not receive a single fucking penny from the Arts Council of Great Britain while writing this novel."

The time: 11.15am on Monday. The scene: Carriage F on the 10.45am South Wales and West train speeding to Newport. The personnel: chaps in suits, female management consultant, fat Welsh family returning home after London weekend. The tables are full of coffee cups, orange juice cans, *pain au chocolat*. Then, shattering the peace, comes the voice of a huge, burly, besuited man with a mobile phone clamped in one bearish paw. He barrels into the compartment like a school bully and swaggers along it. His voice suggests Ireland, and he is yelling instructions down the tiny phone as if struggling to be heard in Inishbofin, over the boom of the Atlantic. He is oblivious to the people in the carriage, and pauses at an empty seat to bellow further orders, as if stopping to rest at a park bench. My fellow traveller across the table raises his eyebrow, then turns right round in his seat to glare at the miscreant. But he's British and therefore wouldn't dream...

"SO YOU'LL MEET ME THERE?" bellows the Irishman. "BUT HOW WILL YOU KNOW ME?" There's a brief shared giggle around the compartment. Then a man at the back emerges from his newspaper, and calls out, "That'll be simple. You'll be the one doing the shouting." The man looks over, with Celtic hostility. Is there going to be trouble? Amazingly, a second man shouts, "You don't really need a phone, do you?" Mutiny! From nowhere, a third chips in, "He can probably hear you just as well without one." The man, after a dumbshow of bafflement, aggression and hurt, shambles off to the security of the next carriage, leaving us triumphant. But I remember how he looked: like an actor, confident of wowing the audience with his swashbuckling panache, and finding instead a lot of heckling, catcalls and root vegetables flung through the air.



Today sees the arrival of Santa Claus at Macy's (above) and the beginning of Christmas shopping across the US

Photograph: Reuters

The hardest sell: persuading Americans to give up shopping



POLLY TOYNBEE
NO BUYING DAY

A few days ago, standing in midtown New York outside FAO Schwartz, the dream toy shop, with Bergdorf Goodman just across the road, Bloomingdale's and Macy's not far away, I stopped to breathe in the heady oxygen of pure unadulterated Christmas consumption. It's what New York's for. It's a dry martini, a high octane, maniacal jolt of retail nirvana, shopping heaven.

Most Greens have never felt a twinge of any of that. In fact they have no idea at all what you mean, and they shudder in genuine revulsion at this avid consumption. They simply cannot understand why people who have so much stuff already can possibly want anything more. That is why the Greens are not much good at getting across their message that the party is over and some of this has to change before we really do shop till we drop.

A story on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* caught my eye on the newsstand that morning. Adbusters, a well-financed green media campaign, were protesting that all the US television networks had refused to carry their expensive produced commercial for No Buying Day (which is tomorrow, the day after Thanksgiving). Adbusters plans to take the TV networks to court, for breaching the First

Amendment (free speech).

Their ad showed a cartoon pig licking its lips and snorting over a map of the US with a voice-over in tones of green disgust telling Americans that in their guzzling greed they each consume "five times more than a Mexican, 10 times more than a Chinese and 30 times more than an Indian..." Americans do not like to be called pigs, guzzlers, fat or ugly so the networks banned the commercial. When the ad did appear on the cable CNN channel, the campaign was inundated with abusive calls from people insisting on their right to consume whatever they like.

What of tomorrow's No Buying Day? It has about as much chance of success in Manhattan as an Anti-Allah rally in Tehran. Nonetheless, all over the Western world, following America's lead, tomorrow is anti-shopping day. In London, Friends of the Earth is opening a No Shop art installation in Waterloo for No Shop Day. A No Sales Assistant (a familiar sort) will sell people nothing and give them receipts thanking them for not shopping here. There will be No Shop zones in many British cities, with people selling "real" values - Romance Wine, Best Pal Lager and limited edition jars of Happiness. Some people will be making their own Christmas presents in the streets (beware the macramé pot-plant holder and the raffia lampshade).

While it's witty, there is also a puritanical moral agenda here that makes their message pretty unpalatable. Sometimes the green movement sounds as if it started out with a revulsion for the modern world, and then looked around for good scientific reasons to back up their gut disgust. They simply lack that sense of pleasure and good fortune others of us feel when contemplating the wonder of a television set, a computer, a central heating thermostat, a microwave, a car,

a washing machine or a mobile phone. Back to nature is all very well, but a washing machine is a whole lot better. In a recent hand-out, Friends of the Earth quotes a (male) guru describing the clothes' line as one of Seven Sustainable Wonders of the World. Really.

Kalle Lasn, the American former advertising executive who founded Adbusters, which devotes itself to debunking consumerism, says No Buying Day is a chance to make people break their "Bnyalological Urge". He told me he thinks shopping is a sign of depression, a disease. "For the disempowered, it's therapy because in a shop they're the boss, in control, with all these nice polite sales assistants. Of course when they come out they feel even worse. The whole American dream is built on consuming more and more."

Friends of the Earth in London are equally inclined to moralise. Said their press officer yesterday, "Most of what people consume doesn't hurt them pleasure. They can have more cars and mobile phones, but they really need more time for family, friends and communicating with people." (It's good to talk, but not by phone). "Buying things doesn't buy people happiness in any meaningful sense." This kind of talk makes me uneasy. How do you judge whose happiness is "meaningful"?

All this anti-consumerism in the Green movement is a serious mistake. It alienates normal people, who, since the dawn of time, have always liked to acquire more things, given half a chance. Shopping is now the top leisure activity, hence the burgeoning malls. Telling people they mustn't - or worse, that they're pigs, is a recipe to guarantee the Green movement a permanent place on the margins of political life.

Next week the Kyoto climate summit opens, trying, yet again, to commit the world's big consumers to burn less fossil fuel.

The more economic growth, the more fuel we burn: emitting less CO2 usually means consuming less. At last the world's leaders are signed up to the idea that something must be done, because climate change is here and is a peril. The Americans are again cast as the villains, with their Congress refusing to cut back, despite Clinton's efforts. Europe will look smug: while American CO2 emissions have soared, the EU will hit its target of stabilising CO2 at 1990 levels by the year 2000. However, Europe has only done it by accident not by green self-sacrifice - with recessions in some countries, Britain's shift from coal to gas power stations, Germany's cleaning up/closing down of the East's inefficient dirty factories. In other words, no one has yet taken any pain on purpose in order to slow global warming.

If the West's leaders fail to reach a significant legally binding agreement it will be out of fear of the voters in rich countries who have not yet seriously confronted the issue. Why not? Because the West's leaders have not dared confront their voters with the hard truth. Only this week our own Chancellor was trumpeting both economic growth and lower energy prices, while giving a tid-

dy hit for more home insulation, as if greenness was just a little add-on. If our politicians don't dare hint at even a little belt-tightening, then who is going to change popular attitudes, creating a political climate where politicians can be elected who will tackle the global climate?

If all we've got is the green movement, then the message is unlikely to get far. Apocalypse Now is not the right message. Nor is hair-shirt shopping-hate. Change is needed, but it doesn't mean closing down Oxford Street and the end of capitalism. Fuel prices need to rise, energy conserved, patterns of consuming and public spending need to change. Doing that equitably will be difficult but not impossible, nor the end of shopping as we know it. But, yes, it does mean some pain.

I like the radical plan devised by Dr Mayer Hillman, of the Policy Studies Institute, where every country, then every individual within it, is given an energy ration. The rich could buy rations from the poor, to their mutual advantage, distributing both energy and money more fairly. But as Kyoto will probably prove, the world is still as unlikely to adopt that kind of thinking as Manhattan is to shut down on No Buying Day tomorrow.

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What can happen when opposing parties co-operate

ROBERT MACLENNAN
VOTING REFORM

The agreement of the Committee on Constitutional Reform, chaired by Robin Cook and myself before the general election, much of which was embodied in our manifesto and that of the Labour Party, has set in train an unprecedented legislative programme of constitutional change. And now, with the expected announcement of the appointment of a Government Commission to recommend a fair voting system for Westminster, is an apt moment to reflect on the results of cross-party co-operation.

The two parties started from quite different positions. Labour - frustrated by years of opposition, threatened by nationalists in their heartland, scandalised by Tory abuses of power and patronage - recognised the need for a number of different reforms to minister to the nation's sickness of government. We Liberal Democrats had a wider and more coherent ultimate objective - a rebalanced written constitution, with proper checks and balances, to replace the outdated concept of the sovereignty of Parliament with a practical scheme to secure the sovereignty of the people. But the political parties thought it helpful to the securing of a reform-minded Parliament to agree a common programme of step-by-step changes.

The innovation of the Liberal Democrat membership of the Cabinet Committee has been a necessary part of the

process of implementing constitutional change. It has given us the forum in which to argue for our priorities, to seek to modify proposals or to bring forward timely and apt ideas to meet problems. Of course there have been moments of difficulty and disagreement; but to have within prospect the achievement of Scottish and Welsh Home Rule, the European Convention on Human Rights enforceable in British Courts, and a nationwide proportional system of election to the European Parliament - to pick out only the pre-eminent matters tackled - is highly satisfactory. For many reformers, however, the question of fair votes for Westminster is a touchstone issue. It is the key to the pluralist system of government to which we aspire. In our cross-party pre-election agreement we proposed that "a Commission on voting systems for the Westminster parliament should

be appointed early in the next Parliament to recommend the appropriate proportional alternative to the first-past-the-post system." We are approaching the moment when the process of implementing that undertaking must be put in train.

The choice of chairman and membership of the commission are important to the achievement of a recommendation that will carry weight with the electors. The remit of the commission should satisfy the two parties' agreement, in the case of Labour specifically reflected in their election manifesto.

There have been flurries of speculation from time to time that the non-proportional Alternative Vote would be the preferred choice of Labour to put to the people (an outcome wholly at odds with all our commitments). When the work of proposing an alternative proportional voting system is passed to the commission, elec-

toral reformers would be wise to reflect that it is the principles behind our preferred system to which we are ultimately attached: a proportional national outcome, wider voter choice and, preferably, the attachment of elected members to geographical constituencies.

Liberal Democrats favour STV and will strenuously recommend this to the commission; because it is a broadly, though not precisely, proportional system. It does secure voter choice and does attach elected Members to geographical constituencies. The Alliance Commission in 1982, chaired by Sir Henry Fisher, advocated STV with a few sparsely populated constituencies voting by AV. A composite scheme including an element of AV, which gives a nationally proportional outcome, could meet all our principles. Electoral reformers must now work for a consensus embodying these

principles to help to ensure that the commission on electoral reform will indeed advocate a proposal behind which we can unite to win the support of the British people for reform in the following referendum.

What wider conclusions are to be drawn for the future from the experience of the last few months? This co-operative activity differs from coalition. The participants are not collectively responsible for all the decisions of government but, in respect of the areas of co-operation, must observe the rules which apply to government deliberations. More important, the partners are honour-bound to seek agreements both can commend as helping to achieve their shared goals. The success of the co-operation so far has rested not on aspirations but upon hard-edged agreed policies. It is that which must necessarily limit the scope of cross-party co-operation.

23/BUSINESS

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Half of English coalfield and 5,000 jobs at risk

Half the remaining deep mines in England were under threat of closure last night with the loss of 5,000 jobs as RJB Mining, the UK's largest coal producer, prepared to close pits because of the slump in demand from electricity generators. National Power, RJB's largest customer, is halving its coal order next year. Chris Godsmark, Business Correspondent, reports.

The board of RJB, led by Richard Budge, chief executive, will meet on Monday to sanction a review of how it will match capacity with demand when existing long term coal contracts, negotiated before privatisation, expire next April. The company will draw up the list of pit closures, though sources denied that the first wave of cuts would come next week.

However, colliery managers have been preparing for closures, with industry experts suggesting at least six of the 17 RJB pits likely to close. Mines on the "at risk" list include all or part of the Selby "superpit", where output has shrunk from 12 million tonnes to less than 8 million as RJB hit a series of production problems. Selby also employs a high proportion of contract workers, which make up almost a quarter of the 9,000 strong workforce at RJB's deep mines.

Other pits facing possible closure include Calverton and Clipstone in Nottinghamshire, where workers would not be subject to the generous redundancy compensation agreed by the government for most mines at privatisation. Neil Greaves, president of the Nottinghamshire Union of Democratic Mineworkers, said: "It looks at this moment in time like half the pits in the industry will close."

The drastic drop in demand for RJB coal from the big power generators was confirmed yesterday when National Power said it would buy just 18 million tonnes of coal from the group over the next three years. It compares with the 18 million tonnes it currently buys annually. RJB has

also been forced to accept a near 25 per cent price cut, to around £1.15 a gigajoule. The deal will see National Power buy 8 million tonnes next year, though this includes a 3 million tonne contract already announced. In the following two years the tonnage will drop to just 5 million tonnes. The agreement is the latest blow to the embattled RJB, which has concluded a deal with Eastern, the third biggest coal-fired generator, which would also see its order fall by half next year to just 4 million tonnes.

PowerGen, the second largest generator, has yet to conclude negotiations but said last week that it could buy just two or three million tonnes annually from RJB, down from nine million this year. It means the group's total order book for its deep mines would slump from 30 million tonnes to 15 million tonnes or less.

David Price, from the industry journal Coal UK, said the National Power deal was a "disaster" for the industry. "Other people have spent a year and a half taking Richard Budge's business off him and he tried to stick out for a better deal. He's failed."

The game of political brinkmanship between RJB and the Government escalated yesterday, when John Battle, the energy minister, told the Commons that the company had formally asked the Department of Trade and Industry for a subsidy. Mr Battle rejected the demand, telling MPs he did not "believe we should give a cash subsidy to a private, profitable company".

The RJB letter did not mention a specific sum, though the company believes a £35m annual grant over two years would be enough to save around 10 pits. The cash would encourage the generators to switch from buying imported coal, at some 15 per cent cheaper than RJB's prices for next year.

Mr Battle also announced that Clare Spottiswoode, the gas regulator, would be investigating claims that gas-fired generating plants built by the regional electricity companies were more expensive than coal. Ofgas, the gas watchdog, is expected to give details of the review next week. RJB has already complained to the European Commission about the so-called take-or-pay gas contracts agreed by the RECs after privatisation.

Outlook, page 25



Tony Greener, Guinness' chairman, faced an uphill battle to convince the increasingly irate shareholders at yesterday's meeting about the new title

Guinness' new name gets shareholder thumbs down

The US competition authorities are expected to sanction the £23bn merger of Guinness and Grand Metropolitan next week as long as the group sells Dewar's whisky and several other smaller spirits brands.

The news came as shareholders in the two UK drinks groups overwhelmingly backed the merger but not without vociferous complaints about its new name. Andrew Yates reports.

"[The name] Diageo is meant to explain giving pleasure every day everywhere. That could apply to a lot of things. Sexual intercourse for instance. Maybe we

should rename the group that," said one disgruntled Guinness shareholder yesterday. "This new name is almost unpronounceable. When I first heard it I thought it was pronounced 'Dire go'. That sounds like a medicine to prevent some sort of unmentionable stomach disease," he added.

There was widespread condemnation of the Diageo name at the Guinness meeting yesterday afternoon to agree its merger with Grand Metropolitan. At an earlier meeting of GrandMet shareholders there was similar dismay at the choice of the new name.

One GrandMet shareholder said: "When I first heard the name I thought it was pronounced Die Ago, which leads me to think of food poisoning. Why not have a good old British name instead of one that will be mispronounced around the world."

Tony Greener, Guinness' chairman, faced an uphill battle to convince the increasingly irate shareholders. "You will still

be able to buy Guinness, my favourite pint." A rowdy crowd was having none of it. After the Guinness board showed a video designed to explain Diageo it was met with shouts of "rubbish". Shareholders expressed concerns about the cost of finding a new name. When Mr Greener revealed that the bill was in the region of £250,000, one shareholder said: "That's childish. With all the brains on the board surely you could have easily invented a silly name like Diageo."

Not that the alternatives to Diageo were much better. *The Independent* can reveal some of the other names that Guinness and GrandMet considered for their new venture. It was close to choosing Carista, perhaps designed to conjure up images of a charismatic new food and drinks group. However, it had to give up the idea after it found that the name was already registered in several other countries around the world. It also rejected 'Cordica' because

it sounded too much like the name of Cordiant, the advertising agency.

However, the obvious distaste shown for Diageo the 400 or so Guinness shareholders who attended the meeting turned out to be nothing more than a side show. Mr Greener revealed that 97 per cent of shareholders who voted, backed the name change.

One Guinness shareholder raised concerns about the £700,000 annual salary Mr Greener received on top of bonuses such as subsidised lunches. "Why don't you and the board limit your greed so we get more money," he said.

City sources also confirmed yesterday that the creation of Diageo was due to receive the green light from the US Federal Trade Commission next week. However, the group is expected to have to give up Dewar's, North America's leading whisky brand and several other spirits. Diageo shares will start trading on 17 December.

UK sites could suffer in Korean cutbacks as Samsung retrenches

The international implications of the South Korean economic crisis were felt for the first time yesterday, as the giant Samsung Group, a big investor in the UK, announced a restructuring which will cut investment by about one-third. Richard Lloyd Parry in Seoul and Chris Godsmark in London report.

The company insisted that the brunt of the cuts would be felt within Korea and that the company would continue to expand overseas. But analysts believe that the weakness of the Korean won against foreign currencies, plus tough retrenchment measures likely to be prescribed as part of a bailout package by the International Monetary Fund, will have an inevitable effect on Korean investment abroad.

Samsung's senior managers will suffer 10 per cent pay cuts as part of the restructuring, travel and entertainment budgets will be cut in half, and the company will launch a "Saving One Trillion Won" (£689m) campaign designed, in the words of yesterday's announcement, "to capture the

imagination and support of employees worldwide in an effort to create a more frugal Samsung".

Next year 34 product lines will be shelved, saving 1.3 trillion won. The group did not announce how many jobs this will cost, but all of the Korean-based businesses controlled by the group will be forced to eliminate a layer of management.

The group will "focus on core growth businesses, such as memory and non-memory semiconductors, telecommunications, automobiles and Samsung Corporation's retail business," according to the announcement.

Next year alone, investment will be cut from 8.2 trillion won to 6 trillion won. Korean newspapers yesterday quoted government officials saying that they would generally "discourage" investment projects which require foreign currency funding, in an attempt to prevent any deterioration in the already stricken economy.

Korea was forced to turn to the IMF after being driven almost to bankruptcy by the decline in the value of the won, which has drained the country's reserves and raised the cost of debt repayment to foreign banks. It has also driven up the cost of foreign goods and investment and, despite Sam-

sung's avowals yesterday, some analysts believe that a reduction in Korean overseas investments is certain.

"The first thing the IMF is likely to say is that the government needs to slash the breaks on investment, and that will particularly affect overseas projects," said Richard Samuelson of SBC Warburg in Seoul. "The government could allow interest rates to rise, and they could withhold permission for specific projects. Politically it's always easier to make these kinds of cuts abroad than at home."

In the last four years, in conscious emulation of their Japanese rivals, Korean firms have invested heavily overseas. Half of their money has gone to Asia, much of it to low-cost manufacturing projects, and just one-fifth to Europe. But 60 per cent of that total, about \$6.75bn (£4bn), has gone to Britain, the majority in the form of electronic manufacturing.

Samsung has three UK plants on Teeside, two of which were opened in 1995 as part of a £450m investment programme. The group manufactures microwave ovens, computer monitors and colour televisions and is thought to have so far spent £60m on its drive in the British market, creating 1,400 jobs in the process.

The British arm of Daewoo, another Korean conglomerate which has invested heavily in the UK, claimed the crisis had strengthened its resolve to complete its investment programme. Daewoo is spending £15m a year building up its car design and retailing operations, with a base in Worthing, Sussex, employing 1,000 staff. Another business park in Worthing is planned to strengthen the group's engineering facility.

A Daewoo spokesman said the UK operations would move into profit "sooner than people are expecting". Daewoo also makes VCRs in Northern Ireland, while Hyundai has a Scottish microchip plant.

A year ago, LG announced the UK's biggest ever inward investment project, a huge £1.7bn semiconductor facility in Newport, Wales. The first stage of the investment, a computer monitor plant, began production a fortnight ago, with some 400 staff already employed.

David Rowe-Beddoe, chairman of the Welsh Development Agency, said he saw no cause for serious concern from the Korean turmoil. "We keep close contact with them. Markets go up and down but I remain confident that the Koreans will continue to invest."

All these firms face drastic and painful changes, of which those announced yesterday by Samsung are just the beginning. Far East crisis, page 24

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Far East crisis, page 24

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	4881.20	27.70	0.57	5367.30	3982.70	3.69
FTSE 250	4851.60	20.50	0.44	4983.80	4321.60	3.48
FTSE 350	2861.40	12.80	0.55	2970.50	1935.70	3.55
FTSE All Share	2308.90	12.02	0.52	2507.88	1942.22	3.56
FTSE SmallCap	2286.1	5.20	0.23	2407.40	2127.50	3.30
FTSE Pre-Open	1237.6	-0.30	-0.02	1348.50	1188.70	3.41
FTSE AIM	969.9	-2.40	-0.25	1138.00	865.80	1.07
Dow Jones	7829.30	19.40	0.25	8280.00	6208.15	1.74
Nikkei	18045.55	178.02	1.12	21460.57	14586.13	0.96
Hong Kong	10590.11	264.35	2.56	18820.31	9775.88	4.00
Dax	3916.53	67.30	1.75	4458.89	2780.76	2.04

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling		UK 10 year gilt		US long bond	
1.750	6.000	6.500			
1.700	5.875	6.375			
1.650	5.750	6.250			
1.600	5.625	6.125			
1.550	5.500	6.000			
1.500	5.375	5.875			
1.450	5.250	5.750			
1.400	5.125	5.625			
1.350	5.000	5.500			
1.300	4.875	5.375			
1.250	4.750	5.250			
1.200	4.625	5.125			
1.150	4.500	5.000			
1.100	4.375	4.875			
1.050	4.250	4.750			
1.000	4.125	4.625			
0.950	4.000	4.500			
0.900	3.875	4.375			
0.850	3.750	4.250			
0.800	3.625	4.125			
0.750	3.500	4.000			
0.700	3.375	3.875			
0.650	3.250	3.750			
0.600	3.125	3.625			
0.550	3.000	3.500			
0.500	2.875	3.375			
0.450	2.750	3.250			
0.400	2.625	3.125			
0.350	2.500	3.000			
0.300	2.375	2.875			
0.250	2.250	2.750			
0.200	2.125	2.625			
0.150	2.000	2.500			
0.100	1.875	2.375			
0.050	1.750	2.250			
0.000	1.625	2.125			
-0.050	1.500	2.000			
-0.100	1.375	1.875			
-0.150	1.250	1.750			
-0.200	1.125	1.625			
-0.250	1.000	1.500			
-0.300	0.875	1.375			
-0.350	0.750	1.250			
-0.400	0.625	1.125			
-0.450	0.500	1.000			
-0.500	0.375	0.875			
-0.550	0.250	0.750			
-0.600	0.125	0.625			
-0.650	0.000	0.500			
-0.700	-0.125	0.375			
-0.750	-0.250	0.250			
-0.800	-0.375	0.125			
-0.850	-0.500	0.000			
-0.900	-0.625	-0.125			
-0.950	-0.750	-0.250			
-1.000	-0.875	-0.375			
-1.050	-0.950	-0.450			
-1.100	-1.000	-0.500			
-1.150	-1.050	-0.550			
-1.200	-1.100	-0.600			
-1.250	-1.150	-0.650			
-1.300	-1.200	-0.700			
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-9.300	-9.200	-8.700			
-9.350	-9.250	-8.750			
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Apec summit leaders announce crisis meeting to end Asian economic turmoil

The United States is soon to convene a special meeting of finance ministers to discuss the economic turmoil in Asia.

The plan was announced in Vancouver late on Tuesday at the end of the summit of economic leaders from the Pacific Rim, and - as Mary Dejevsky reports - it showed Washington's continued determination to resist pressure from some Asian countries for an 'Asian' solution to their problems.

US officials would not say when the meeting would be held or which finance ministers would be invited, but its purpose is to discuss the rescue plan endorsed at Vancouver this week for the ailing Asian economies - and place it in a global context. It will also have the desirable effect for President Bill Clinton of the US of showing him as an international economic leader, despite his recent defeats on trade and international finance issues in Congress.

The meeting, as presented by the Americans, is intended to sustain the momentum built up at the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) summit this week, and is in addition to next week's gathering of Asian and American finance ministers in Malaysia. It will have a double purpose: to show

that Washington takes the current instability in Asia seriously - despite President Clinton's earlier reference to it as just "a few glitches" - and to make plain the US view that national economies are all part of a single global system and should conform to similar standards. This was spelled out in the official declaration adopted by the 18 Apec leaders at Vancouver, which asserted the prime role of the International Monetary Fund in all economic rescues in Asia or elsewhere. "On a global level," it said, "the IMF remains central." But President Clinton, while pleased with the mood of co-operation at Vancouver, and with participants' support for further trade liberalisation, appeared to feel that the global approach needed further impetus.

The rescue plans agreed so far for four Asian countries - Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and now South Korea - have a provisional price tag of \$68bn (\$40bn), more than the Mexican bail-out three years ago and a record for the IMF. But they are not just IMF bail-outs.

The Apec summit also endorsed a set of principles, known as the Manila Framework, work after the emergency meeting of ministers and central bankers in the Philippines last week. They stipulate IMF involvement, provide for supplementary assistance to be granted regionally "when necessary", and also require recipient countries to commit themselves to whatever reforms may be needed to run their economies and finance systems on a sound basis.

This three-tier framework was applied first to the Indonesia rescue, but it has now been elevated to a general formula to be invoked for other bail-outs. It does not, however, specify which countries might contribute to any supplementary financing, nor does it stipulate any sum.

The endorsement of the Manila Framework was hailed as the main achievement of this week's summit. Participants also tried hard to calm the volatile markets by insisting on the underlying strengths of Asia's "Tiger" economies and stressing the region's exceptionally strong prospects for continued growth. The defiant confidence of the formal declaration sat uncomfortably with the record rescue plan that was endorsed, and not all participants were convinced that

Asia's instability could be prevented from spreading.

The two-day meeting also exposed continuing friction between the US and Japan, both on bilateral relations and on an appropriate response to the current turmoil in Asia. President Clinton and other US officials made clear that they regarded Japan as "the key" to containing Asia's economic difficulties and wanted it to speed up its own economic recovery in the hope that it would provide a "locomotive" to assist growth in neighbouring countries. Fearing that economic turbulence in Japan could increase its trade surplus with the US, the Americans also advised the Japanese not to use exports as the prime stimulus for its economy.



Bill Clinton: The special meeting after Vancouver will aid the President in appearing as a world economic leader

Japanese leaders appeal for calm after another bank collapses

Japan's finance minister and the governor of its central bank made a joint appeal for calm yesterday, after the collapse of yet another small bank underlined the continuing fragility of the country's financial system. Richard Lloyd-Parry reports.

Hiroshi Mitsuzuka, the minister of finance, and Yasuo Matsushita, the governor of the Bank of Japan (BoJ), repeated their promise to protect depositors after the small Tokyo City Bank became the third Japanese financial institution to collapse in less than a fortnight. "We strongly urge the public not to pay heed to irresponsible rumours and to act calmly," their joint statement said. "The stance of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the BoJ is that we will provide funds smoothly and without hesitation so that repayment of financial firms' deposits and other payments will not be hindered."

The demise of Tokyo City Bank, a small regional bank based in the northern city of Sendai, follows the collapse last Monday of the 10th-ranked Hokkaido Takushoku Bank and, three days ago, of the brokerage Yamaichi Securities. But the news had little effect yesterday on the stock market, which rose 3 per cent at one point to close up 178 points, or 1 per cent at 16,045.

Investors seem to be increasingly confident that the government will eventually use public funds to stabilise the financial system by providing loans to weakened banks which still have relatively sound business. Japanese finance houses are suffering a credit squeeze, caused by eroded confidence among foreign lenders.

Yesterday the credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service said it was contemplating downgrading the Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan, Nippon Credit Bank, and the three trust banks, Mitsui Trust, Yasuda Trust, and Chuo Trust. Ominous rumours circulated about other firms, and several shares in the financial sector were down sharply. Among the brokerages, Nikko Securities' shares went down, as did the smaller Taiheiyō Securities.

Daiwa Securities, Japan's second largest, held a press conference to deny market rumours that it had concealed off-the-books losses, a ploy which contributed to the demise on Monday of its competitor, Yamaichi.

The president of Nippon Credit Trust told journalists in New York that, contrary to rumours, his parent company, Nippon Credit Bank, had shown "marvellous" results.

The biggest institution to be the subject of rumours is Fuji Bank, the main creditor of Yamaichi Securities which, like the entire financial sector, is labouring under the burden of bad loans left over from the 1980s "bubble" economy.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Almest Polar (F)	98.9m (98.4m)	10.0m (8.9m)	14.8p (13.5p)	6.0p (5.5p)
Allegro Furniture (I)	41.7m (39.3m)	1.51m (2.52m)	4.04p (6.06p)	1.95p (1.95p)
Amber Industrial (I)	12.1m (11.9m)	1.7m (1.3m)	6.0p (4.4p)	1.75p (1.75p)
Callison (I)	87.5m (86.3m)	1.27m (0.754m)	31.0p (17.3p)	5.5p (5.0p)
DSS Management (I)	72.5m (53.8m)	0.478m (2.73m)	0.6p (4.5)	1.4p (1.2p)
Harrop Industries (I)	68.2m (48.4m)	3.8m (2.7m)	21.5p (17.8p)	0.65p (0.6p)
Medical War (I)	61.0m (45.7m)	6.5m (4.36m)	1.67p (7.9p)	3.5p (3.15p)
Mid West Holdings (I)	21.3m (20.4m)	0.3m (4.9m)	36.8p (19.1p)	13.2p (12.0p)
Northing Home Procs (I)	11.6m (3.5m)	3.2m (1.14m)	6.25p (4.44p)	6.25p (3.7p)
Pillar Property (I)	26.6m (21.2m)	6.85m (3.19m)	3.5p (2.1p)	1.8p (1.6p)
Southdown Electric (I)	799.4m (782.4m)	103.0m (112.2m)	17.9p (17.1p)	7.1p (6.45p)
Tate & Lyle (F)	4.6b (5.2m)	159.3m (276.3m)	22.8p (40.5p)	17.0p (17.0p)
Thames Water (I)	28.3m (24.8m)	2.71m (1.81m)	4.8p (3.9p)	1.1p (0.9p)
Trifast (I)	37.5m (27.7m)	4.04m (3.27m)	16.85p (12.64p)	3.75p (3.23p)
Vandoren Luxury (F)	693.1m (703.6m)	116.8m (113.0m)	12.1p (12.0p)	3.7p

(F) - Final (I) - Interim

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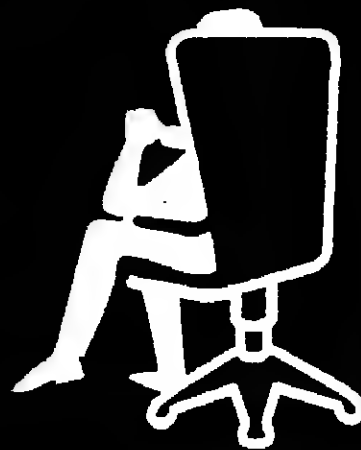
**BUSINESS
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My business is profitable, but could we earn more?

My turnover's healthy, but could we sell more?

My staff are efficient, but could they do more?

**YOUR BUSINESS HAS COME
A LONG WAY.
SO WHERE DO YOU GO
FROM HERE?**



BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES FOR WALES, SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND CAN ALSO BE CONTACTED THROUGH THE BUSINESS LINK NUMBER.

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OUTLOOK ON HIGHER CORPORATE TAXES, THE DEATH OF THE COAL INDUSTRY AND THE GUINNESS REPORT

Brown makes companies pay for tax reform

Gordon Brown's pre-Budget statement on Tuesday completed the redrawing of the corporate tax system that he began in July. Unfortunately, and despite the Chancellor's pro-business rhetoric, the net effect is to leave the corporate sector worse off, not better off, both in the short and long term. The abolition of Advance Corporation Tax, following the ending of tax credits on dividends in July, will leave Britain with a simpler structure and the lowest rate of corporate tax outside Scandinavia and Ireland.

Many interested parties had advocated these reforms, and the Chancellor's announcement has been broadly welcomed by everybody from the academics at the Institute for Fiscal Studies to business organisations like the CBI and IoD. The proposals even include a measure that will permit companies with surplus ACT to run it down as much as they could have under the old system, so none should be left high and dry by the abolition of ACT.

So how come the cheers are so half hearted? The abolition of ACT and the corporation tax cut announced on Tuesday will be combined with a switch in the timing of tax payments that will, over a four year transition period, bring them forward. The cost to companies will be around £2bn a year for the four financial years to 2003.

The Treasury points this as a temporary cash-flow hit that will enable business to have the kind of tax structure it has been asking for. This is disingenuous. It is, in reality, a temporary tax increase, a real, one off hit on the corporate sector of £8bn. The public finances look that much healthier for the four year transition period, but let's not

pretend that corporate cash flow does.

It is true that business will pay £2bn a year less in tax after the transition period. Regrettably, this does not offset the increase in the tax burden announced in July. The abolition of the dividend tax credit will cost pension funds nearly £4bn in 1998/99 and more thereafter. Companies will bear much of that burden in the short term even though future pensioners will carry it in the long term. Nor is this cash flow hit offset by the July cut in corporation tax, which knocked £1.4bn off next year's corporate tax bill. The bottom line is that for the next four years, British business will be paying £5bn a year more in tax.

Somebody has to pay taxes, and most voters would prefer them to fall on business than themselves. But the Chancellor cannot get away with his claim that these measures support business or help boost investment in the short term, even if he has set up a better long term structure for corporate taxation.

Kissing goodbye to the coal industry

Closing down coal mines is a bit like working in them - dirty, dangerous and, as Michael Heseltine discovered in 1992, costly to political reputations. As New Labour prepares to finish off the job that Hezza began and dump what remains of the English coal industry on the slagheap, history looks like repeating itself.

John Battle, the Energy Minister, is the

hapless soul given the task of telling Richard Budge that he has no subsidy, no hope and no future. Yesterday, as he barked through his brief from the despatch box, he was joined by the Prince of Darkness, the Minister without Portfolio, Peter Mandelson - always a sure sign of trouble brewing.

If the Government is to preside over the closure of a third of RJB Mining's 17 deep mine pits and with them 5,000, perhaps 10,000, jobs, then Mr Budge wants to make sure the Energy Minister at least joins the casualty list.

The Budge line is that it would only take £30m of subsidy a year to bridge the gap between what the generators are prepared to pay and the price he needs to keep his pits open. If the Government can find £400m to keep the pensioners warm this winter, then surely £30m is not much to ask to keep a whole industry alive. Alas this misses the point. Even if it were feasible to subsidise one producer in one section of the energy market, it would hardly serve the Government's wider agenda, which is to be seen as the clean man of Europe.

When Mr Blair jets off to Kyoto in three days time, he knows that the best way for Britain to honour its pledge to cut CO2 emissions by 20 per cent by 2010 is to jettison a large chunk of the coal industry. Quite apart from the nasty side-effects like mesothelioma and subsidence, coal is a big pain in the ozone layer and no amount of smart technology can make it environmentally acceptable at a price the market is prepared to bear.

New Labour is about to grasp the nettle and the result will not be edifying. But

if the run down of the coal industry can be achieved in a humane manner, then it will surely be worth the pain. It is not easy, particularly for a Labour Government, to say goodbye to the working class culture and traditions of this once mighty industry. But in truth, these things belong now more to a museum than the modern world. The time has come to let go. There are better uses for Government money.

The purpose of DTI investigations

The wheels of Whitehall grind exceedingly slowly. It is almost exactly eleven years to the day that Department of Trade and Industry inspectors were sent into Guinness to investigate the Distillers takeover. Barring last minute hitches, their report on the affair should finally be published this morning.

It is not entirely the DTI's fault that it has taken so long to make this report public. The criminal trials associated with the Guinness scandal were a real impediment to earlier publication, although it ought to be pointed out that the last of these, the trial of Thomas Ward, the American lawyer caught up in the affair, ended more than four and a half years ago. Legal objections from participants in the affair have kept the report under wraps since then.

Even so, the public has every reason to wonder what the purpose is of these highly expensive exercises if they are to be published so long after all the lessons of the

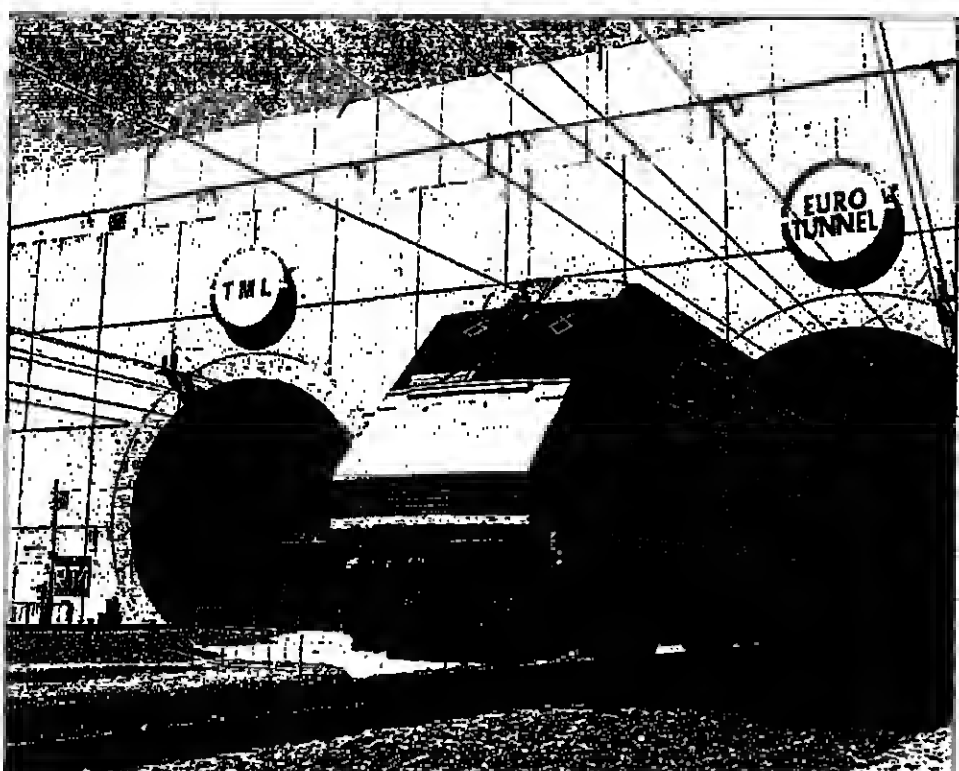
scandal have been learnt and acted upon. The original idea of having Companies Act investigations was so that the authorities could conduct a post mortem on a big business or financial scandal, take whatever regulatory action seemed necessary, learn its lessons and make appropriate changes in the law. A further purpose was to warn interested parties about those named and shamed.

By all accounts, this report makes fascinating reading and it still has the capacity to embarrass a number of people occupying high powered positions in the City and elsewhere. But all the other purposes have long since been and gone. The law has been tightened, the City cleaned up and the main protagonists punished. As such the Guinness report is just an interesting piece of flotsam and jetsam from the mists of time. This is an eloquent chronicle of the corrupt and semi-fraudulent practices that were allowed to flourish in the City in the mid-1980s, but is the writing up of history really such a good use of the £5m of public money this report is reputed to have cost?

Here's the rub, for the Companies Act objective of DTI investigations was never the real purpose of the Guinness inquiry. The main job of the Guinness inspectors became not that of conducting a post mortem, but the collecting of evidence against the chief players so that the Serious Fraud Office could then prosecute them. This use of the DTI's powers of compulsion is now rightly regarded as an infringement of human rights and it has not been repeated since. This report closes the book on a piece of history in more ways than one.

Banks approve Eurotunnel's plan to restructure £8.7bn debt mountain

The Channel Tunnel operator Eurotunnel moved a step closer to financial survival yesterday after its banking syndicate unanimously approved the plan to restructure its £8.7bn debt mountain. Michael Harrison reports.



Eurotunnel: Still waiting for British and French governments to extend its concession

The 174-strong banking syndicate is expected to sign the formal refinancing agreement in January, paving the way for Eurotunnel to swap £2bn of its debt for equity in the spring. The restructuring will give the banks a stake of up to 61 per cent in the tunnel though existing shareholders could theoretically retain majority control through the exercise of two sets of warrants.

Eurotunnel obtained shareholder approval for the debt-equity swap in July. Yesterday's approval from the banks only leaves Eurotunnel waiting on the British and French governments to agree the terms on which they will extend its concession by a further 34 years to 2086.

Patrick Ponsolle, executive chairman of Eurotunnel, said: "If shareholders are to gain the full benefit of the restructuring, the British and French governments should now make a final decision on the conditions under which the concession will be extended."

The two governments want a share of profits over the period of the extension and an undertaking from Eurotunnel

to increase freight traffic through the tunnel. But they are still divided on key elements of the deal.

The French have suggested that Eurotunnel give up 25 per cent of its extra profits. The British Government wants a bigger share of the pot than this and it also wants a concession from the French giving UK freight operators greater access to the French rail network.

Senior Eurotunnel executives said they were "guardedly optimistic" that agreement with the two governments would

be reached around Christmas. "I do not see any insuperable obstacles," said one.

Under the financial restructuring Eurotunnel will exchange £2bn of its debt for equity and equity notes at an issue price of around £1.25. A further £2.7bn of debt will be swapped for other forms of paper, reducing the stake of existing shareholders to 39.4 per cent.

At the same time Eurotunnel will issue new warrants to shareholders enabling them to take their holding back up to between 51 and 55 per cent.

However, in order for the warrants to be exercised, Eurotunnel's share price has to move more than double from last night's closing price of 62p.

The likelihood of approval from the lending syndicate strengthened markedly earlier this year after 20 per cent of the debt changed hands as a group of US banks moved in and a large number of Japanese banks bailed out. US banks now own a quarter of Eurotunnel's debts. The next biggest lenders are the French with 17 per cent of the debt.

Billiton shares hit by warning on base metal price squeeze

Shares in Billiton, the mining group recently demerged from South Africa's Gencor, slumped to a new low yesterday as the company warned that the deepening financial crisis in Asia were squeezing base metal prices and could hit earnings.

The warning sent shares in Billiton, floated at 220p in July, down 6p to 153.5p. The company had gone straight into the FTSE 100 in the summer when it was valued at £4.6bn. Shares in Rio Tinto, the UK's largest listed mining group, also weakened, falling to a 730p low yesterday, before recovering to close 6p higher at 743p.

Announcing the company's first full-year results since the demerger yesterday, Brian Gilbertson, chairman, said the turmoil in Japan and South-east Asia, which are important markets for Billiton's base metals, could prove damaging.

He said although the aluminium market, more than half of the group's earnings, had held up well, the company had seen substantial declines in

spot prices for coal, nickel and ferro-alloys. "If this proves of extended duration, our earnings will not escape the impact," said Mr Gilbertson.

However he added: "Our businesses are at the low end of the production cost spectrum and soundly financed. We should thus be able to endure a period of adversity better than most."

Commenting as the company announced a 3 per cent rise in underlying profits for the year to June to \$335m, Mr Gilbertson said problems in Asia could lead to acquisition opportunities. Although around 70 per cent of the company's net assets are tied up in South Africa, Billiton is growing fast in emerging markets. The company has extensive exploration programmes in Latin America, Australasia and China.

Mr Gilbertson said the development of copper, nickel and zinc projects would be the priority and that he would like to buy an iron-ore deposit.

-Sameen Ahmad

Southern Electric considers further share buy-back

Southern Electric, the sole surviving independent regional power company, said yesterday that it was "seriously considering" launching another share buy-back following the Chancellor's decision to abolish advance corporation tax in this week's Green Budget.

Ian Marchant, Southern's finance director, predicted that the abolition of ACT would end the recent vogue for the privatised utilities for complex capital restructuring schemes, designed to hand back cash to investors but avoid the tax charge associated with straight-forward buy-backs.

In February Southern returned £156m to shareholders through a share consolidation. Yorkshire Water and BG, the former British Gas, both followed Southern's lead this year. However Mr Marchant said he was disappointed that the tax change would not take place until 1999.

Southern also predicted a wave of consolidation in the privatised electricity industry if the Government allowed regional

power companies (RECs) to split their supply and distribution businesses. Jim Forbes, chief executive, said Southern had already been approached by other power groups.

"We talk to everyone. We have to look at these things but we can't say yet what will happen. This is still two years away," he said.

Shares in Southern fell 8p to 447p yesterday after the group revealed a 9m drop in half yearly profits, to £103m. Earnings from its non-regulated contracting businesses slumped from £7.4m to £1.5m, following a sharp drop in orders at its MP Burke subsidiary, which lays television cables. Southern said Cable & Wireless Communications, its biggest customer, had cut its investment budget "overnight".

Mr Forbes also warned that Southern's supply business could lose money in 1999-2000, the second year of a new price formula which caps customer bills for the first time.

-Chris Godsmark

Rising trade gap suggests pound is starting to hit exports

Britain's trade has taken a turn for the worst, with the gap between imports and exports of goods climbing past £1bn. Diane Coyle, Economics Editor, asks whether warnings of the strong pound damaging exports are coming true.

It has been the dog that didn't bark during this recovery. Despite a 20 per cent appreciation of the pound during the past 18

months, so far there has been no sign that the loss of competitiveness has damaged Britain's export performance.

Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, yesterday played down the risk to exports. In an interview the Chancellor said: "There has been consistent growth in volumes by exporters and there will be considerable growth next year."

The Bank of England has similarly pointed out that trade has held up much better than anybody had expected.

But new figures brought the first signs of damage to ex-

port performance. The deficit on trade in goods doubled from £616m in August to £1.3bn in September.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also published for the first time monthly figures for trade in services. This was in surplus by £700m in September, little changed from the previous month.

The total current account therefore shifted from a small surplus of £64m in August to a £552m shortfall in September.

The headline deterioration was exaggerated by erratic moves, but underlying growth

in export volumes fell 0.6 per cent during the month, and slowed markedly between the second and third quarters. Export growth has slipped from 3.3 per cent in April-June to 0.6 per cent in the three months to September.

Perhaps the most telling indication of a darker outlook ahead came from figures for export prices.

After falling steadily since early 1996, they rose for the second month running. Although still 5.5 per cent lower than a year earlier they were up 0.4 per cent in September.

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Agreed Redland bid may herald shake-up in construction

Lafarge, the French construction giant, yesterday bought a near 30 per cent stake in Redland to cement its £1.8bn bid for the distressed British building group. Andrew Yates believes the deal should herald a European shake-up of the construction industry.

Lafarge's agreed cash bid for Redland will lead to the departure of most of the British building group's top executives.

Paul Hewitt, finance director of Redland, is in line to receive a pay-off in the region of £500,000. Robert Napier, chief executive, stands to get £700,000 in compensation. However, it is still unclear how much Rudolph Agnew, the group's £150,000-a-year chairman, will receive, as he is not on a two-year rolling contract. Lafarge is likely to embark on a wide-ranging shake-up of Redland's European and US construction operations, including disposing of some businesses, after virtually securing its £1.8bn bid for the group yesterday. According to industry analysts the takeover is likely to lead to some redundancies, especially in France where Redland's aggregates business has faced a torrid time.

Lafarge upped its 320p a share offer to 345p a share late on Tuesday night after a day of intense negotiations. It emerged yesterday that Redland, which had embarked on a break-up of the group designed to ward off Lafarge, realised it would not have been able to return all the disposal proceeds to shareholders before the middle of 1998.

Given the current uncertainty that is plaguing worldwide stock markets, Redland became increasingly concerned that it may not have been able to achieve a decent price for its European and US aggregates businesses. Faced with the possibility that its bid defence could crumble, Redland's board approached Lafarge with the aim of prompting a higher offer.

Mr Napier said yesterday: "We had to evaluate what was best for shareholders. We decided that the longer term programme involving the liquidation of Redland's assets, taken with the uncertainty of the markets and perhaps the creation of a bit more value, was not the right option. We believe the 345p bid offered the best option."

Analysts believe Redland has been able to extract a reasonable price from Lafarge. One analyst said: "Redland has played a great game of

spoof. There was a lot of politics involved and it managed to get a decent price." Another source said: "The tactical threat of defence was more powerful than the implementation."

It is thought highly unlikely that any other building groups would try and trump the Lafarge bid.

Redland believes the deal will not be blocked by competition authorities in Europe and the US, a view backed up by City analysts. Kevin Cammack, building analyst at Merrill Lynch said: "There should not be a problem. The aggregates market is so fragmented. The only problem could be in France but given that the two groups were already looking to set up a joint venture there, then they must have checked this out already."

Shares in the construction sector rose sharply yesterday on the back of the deal as City observers expected the move to mark a wave of consolidation.



Rudolph Agnew: The Redland chairman and other top executives are likely to go as a result of the deal

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY SAMEENA AHMAD

Tate & Lyle may be over the worst

It has been a difficult year for Tate & Lyle, the sugar and sweeteners group. It has been exposed to fluctuations and excess capacity in its key markets while margins on the group's core commodity product, high-fructose corn syrup, have been the lowest ever recorded.

Given all this it was no surprise that the shares took a pounding in the summer when they lost 13 per cent of their value in one month and the company made an ignominious exit from the Footsie.

Several analysts reckoned the stock was oversold then and it has duly bounced back to levels seen late last year. Yesterday's results provided further evidence that the company is on a stable footing and that the worst may be over.

Full year, pre-exceptional profits at £241.3m were ahead of some expectations and the £82m of exceptional charges for restructurings and write-downs announced at the interim stage. The City is warming to the group's progress in shifting its sales mix towards added-value products and these higher-margin products now account for a quarter of sales and are growing.

The performance of the Staley business in the US was impressive, given the 20 per cent fall in margins caused by the drop in high-fructose corn syrup prices, new market entrants and oversupply. The US sugar business also did well.

The chief disappointment was Amylum, the European starch and sweetener group, where profits fell sharply due to currency factors and costs were incurred in the \$500m investment in a new starch plant.

Management's strategy is to continue to expand in added-value areas, extend further into emerging markets while cutting the cost base in the core US and European businesses.

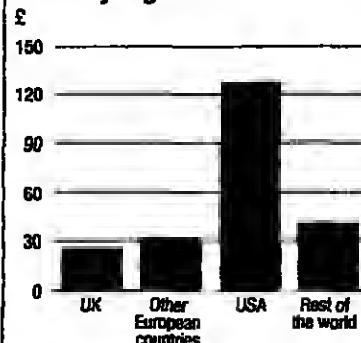
Tate & Lyle is heavily reliant on the next year's prices for high-fructose corn syrup which are decided in January. Negotiations are active now and analysts say that as spot prices have been slightly higher there is a good chance that these will feed through to next year's contract prices.

Tate & Lyle: At a glance

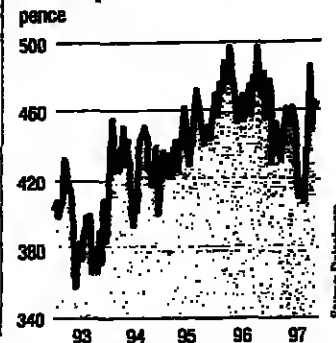
Market value: £2.08bn, share price 466.5p (+8.5p)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Turnover (£bn)	3.89	4.01	4.25	4.88	4.65
Pre-tax profits (£m)	222.5	238.8	311.1	278.5	295
Earnings per share (p)	38.0	43.9	49.7	40.5	22.6
Dividends per share (p)	13.9	14.8	16.3	17.0	17.0

Profit by region



Share price



On full year forecasts of £260m, the shares - 6.5p ahead to 466.5p yesterday - trade on a forward multiple of 13. At these levels a decent share for the long term.

Pillar thrives on retail parks

Pillar Property Holdings made a profit of £20m in just over two years when it sold the Metro Retail Park in Gateshead this week.

It bought the park in August 1995 for £15.8m, spent £7m on improvements and has now sold it for £43m.

Pillar has also just bought a five-acre site for £15m with planning permission for 75,000 square feet of retail space right next to its existing Kinnaird Park and Edinburgh Fort locations. The acquisition creates a single site with 700,000 square feet of space.

These are just the latest in a series of deals which has transformed Pillar into a retail park specialist. In the six months since the end of March it spent £250m on acquisitions

mostly retail parks, against £60m worth of disposals, most of them offices.

It now has 20 parks representing an investment of more than £400m. Chairman Raymond Mould claims retail parks are set to produce better than average growth in rents and disposal values than offices and individual stores.

Pillar's portfolio is currently yielding around 6 per cent, with plenty of scope for improvement as rents come up for review.

Its net asset value was just 188p a share at the end of September, but the brokers think it could reach 240p by the end of the current year and 280p next year.

On the back of this activity, profits more than doubled to £6.9m in the six months to the end of September.

The improvement was not unexpected, and analysts are not immediately revising current forecasts of around £15.5m, equal to 7.8p of earnings, in the current year, and £17.5m, equal to 8.5p of earnings, in 1998-99.

But the shares rose 8p to 280.5p which values them on 36 times this year's prospective earnings and 33 times next year's. High enough.

Another side to nursing homes

It is ironic that while Care First is fighting for its life, AIM-quoted Nursing Home Properties, which yesterday announced a £38m, four for five fund-raising, is talking of recovery in the UK care home market as funding pressures within local authorities ease.

NHP, which buys homes and leases them back to operators on long, high-margin terms should be a big winner. Sale and leaseback arrangements, the norm in the US, are fast gaining popularity here.

UK nursing home operators are recognising that they are better at running homes than negotiating property deals. Capital costs of building are huge and mistakes costly. With banks restricting lending to around 30 per cent of capital costs, NHP offers an attractive alternative, providing 100 per cent of the finance.

Demand among the huge number of unquoted medium-sized nursing homes here which cannot easily raise money elsewhere is accelerating. NHP already has £100m of property deals in the first six months of 1998 compared to £92m in the whole of 1997 and a total property base of £170m.

The UK sale and leaseback market, currently worth over £450m, is growing at some £300m a year and with only one other real competitor in the UK, Principal Healthcare, NHP expects get around half the contracts.

Floated at 100p in February 1995, NHP has not been a stunning investment, underperforming the market by 6 per cent. However its shares rose 5p to 129.5p, a premium to the 125p a share placing price and a 6 per cent premium to the pre-issue net asset value of 144p.

As well as good growth prospects, investors get a nice dividend yield - around 7 per cent assuming current forecasts of an 8.6p dividend are raised.

As well as a move to the main market, which will increase NHP's exposure, a new joint venture gives Lead Lease, the £7bn Australian giant, the right to a 15 per cent stake. Given Meditrust's 20 per cent stake, that could signal an eventual bid battle for NHP. Investors should take up the offer.

Vendôme ahead in jewellery boom

Vendôme, the luxury goods group best known for its Cartier and Alfred Dunhill brands, has increased half-year profits by nearly one-third, helped by strong sales of jewellery and watches. It also appears to have shrugged off the turbulence in the Far East. Nigel Cope, City Correspondent, reports.

Vendôme, which is largely Swiss-based but is listed on the London stock market, said sales of jewellery were up by 46 per cent across the group with sales strong in Europe, the Far East and the Americas. Watch sales were also strong in all markets with the more expensive gold and jewellery timepieces selling strongest.

Reporting a 30 per cent increase in half-year profits to SFr279.2 (£121.4m), Lord Douro, Vendôme's deputy chairman, said the group's sales in the Far East, had not been affected by the turbulence in the financial markets there. The region accounts for 38 per cent of group sales.

He added: "There is no evidence that group sales have been much affected by currency and stock market falls in the Far

East. In a time of financial volatility there is not usually that much effect on the top end of the luxury goods market. There is a tendency to buy goods that retain their value."

Sales in Japan, which account for 16 per cent of group sales, have continued to grow strongly. However, Lord Douro said sales to Japanese nationals travelling elsewhere in the Far East had been hit. Sales in Japan had been "holding up" in November, Lord Douro said, though figures were not yet available.

Chloe, Vendôme's haute couture fashion label where Paul McCartney's daughter Stella is the chief designer, has performed well. Sales from the Paris show six weeks ago are significantly higher than the previous year. Lord Douro said sales from the show were not included in the group's half year figures and would have only a minimal impact on the next reporting period.

Lord Douro shrugged off criticism that Vendôme was poorly understood by the City, which had also urged the group to report on how its individual brands were performing.

The company is majority owned by the South African-controlled, Richmond Securities, and was formed four years ago as part of the re-organisation of the luxury goods businesses of Richmond, Dunhill Holdings and Rothmans International.

Companies must reveal more about joint ventures

Companies will have to disclose in their accounts far more information about the joint ventures and other arrangements that they are increasingly using as the means of entering new markets as a result of a new accounting standard published today. In response to representations from such companies as British Aerospace and BP, which derive substantial parts of their business from such arrangements, the Accounting Standards Board has devised a new form of accounting - the gross equity method - that expands the existing equity method to show the venturer's share of its joint ventures' turnover, gross assets and gross liabilities.

Financial Reporting Standard 9, also requires the results of associate operations to be included in the investor's consolidated financial statements, and assets, liabilities and cash flows of other joint arrangements - such as one-off construction projects - to be included in their participants' individual and consolidated financial statements.

-Roger Tropp

Liffe adds euro contracts

The London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (Liffe) is to strengthen its product range to meet changing market needs in the run up to EMU. All short-term interest rate futures and options contracts now denominated in EMU currencies will be convertible into euros. In addition, Liffe is to introduce a new five-year gilt contract and will also allow "half-tick" pricing and "mid-curve" options in certain contracts.

Daiwa executives charged

Japanese prosecutors have charged three top executives from Daiwa Securities, the Tokyo-based brokerage, for allegedly making illegal payments to a corporate racketeer. Hirofumi Sogame, a former Daiwa vice president, Takeshi Shimamura, a former managing director and Takeshi Nojima, also a former managing director, are alleged to have transferred 36.6 million yen (£171,000) to so-called "sokajya" gangster, Ryuichi Koike.

Allied sells wine producer

Allied Domecq, the spirits and retailing group, has sold its Rhone wine producer, Gabriel Meffre of Gigondas, to a group of investors led by Bertrand Bonnet, currently Gabriel Meffre's managing director. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. Allied said the sale of the wine business, which has a net asset value of £1m, was in line with its spirits and wine strategy of focusing on core international brands.

US clearance for Zeneca

Zeneca announced that Zomig, its new migraine treatment, had been cleared for marketing in the US by the Food and Drug Administration. The company's shares, which had been depressed due to recent downgrades by analysts, jumped sharply to close at £18.27, up 39p.

Growth in US revised down

The US economy grew slightly slower in the third quarter of 1997 than first thought, according to official statistics released yesterday. GDP grew by an annualised 3.3 per cent over the third quarter, revised downwards from 3.5 per cent. But at 3.3 per cent, the economy's growth rate is still regarded as strong by economists.

Provision knocks DBS profits

DBS Management, the network of independent financial advisers, yesterday saw its share price rise by 8 per cent despite a provision for pension mis-selling which ate up 90 per cent of its pre-tax profits.

The company said it had now devoted £4.5m to the cost of carrying out its review of mis-sold personal pensions. In September, the network was fined £425,000 by the Personal Investment Authority - one of the largest fines it has imposed.

The DBS network, which carries out compliance work on behalf of 1,844 firms of independent advisers, said it was now devoting substantial resources to the review and was paying a firm of management consultants to assist it.

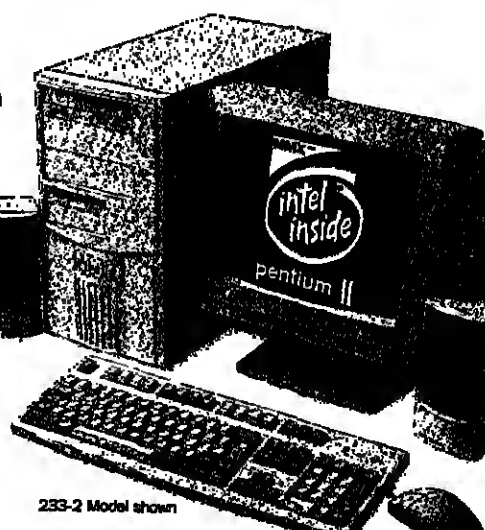
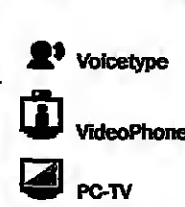
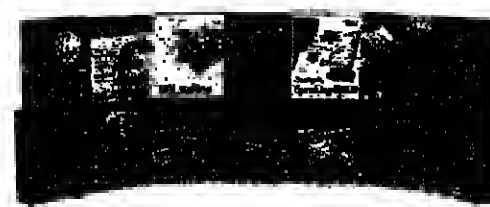
DBS announced it was increasing its interim dividend by 17 per cent. This was despite the provision for mis-selling, which depressed earnings for 1997 to 0.6p per share, down from 4.5p.

-Andrew Verity

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England recall Bentley to renew Small hostilities

It can hardly be described as part of Clive Woodward's youth policy, but John Bentley's return to the England side this weekend adds an indefinable something to the occasion.

Chris Hewett assesses the likely impact of some true Yorkshire grit.

John Bentley, James Small, James Small, John Bentley. Ever since the two fiery three-quarters first went eyeball to eyeball in Cape Town six months ago, they have been bracketed together like Burke and Hare: the salt of the earth Englishman and the South African wide boy, each as brash and boisterous as the other. They will meet again at Twickenham on Saturday and even though they have

been picked on opposite wings, the odds are on an early renewal of hostilities.

Both men professed a profound lack of interest yesterday in harping on about their previous collision at Newlands, when Small accused Bentley of eye-gouging and Bentley accused Small of rank bad sportsmanship in refusing to shake his hand at the end of an explosive third match in what became a triumphant tour for the Lions. Their reasoning was sound enough; after all, Bentley will have to handle the prolific Pieter Rossouw while Small must content himself with the sharper, snappier threat posed by the diminutive David Rees.

Yet the two arch antagonists possess that unique something — call it star quality if you like — that consistently places them on centre stage, directly under the brightest spotlight in the house. They do not like each

other much, if at all, and 75,000 Twickenham spectators will be hoping against hope that they "get it on" again on Saturday.

Bentley, now 31 but yet to play for his country at Twickenham, wins his fourth cap on merit. Rees, a left wing by instinct and breeding even though he plays all his club rugby for Sale on the right, shifts across field to make way for him, with the unfortunate Adedayo Adebayo missing out altogether. Clive Woodward, the England coach, believes Bentley's competitive spirit, his bottomless reservoir of attitude with a capital A, will harden the collective mindset against a world champion outfit rejuvenated by a convincing brace of Test victories in France.

"It hasn't really sunk in," said Bentley yesterday, 24 hours after giving his considerable all for the English Rugby Partnership XV against the All Blacks in Bristol on Tuesday night. "I re-

ENGLAND TEAM V SOUTH AFRICA

M Perry (Bath); J Bentley (Newcastle), P de Garmville (Bath) or N Greenwood (Wasps), W Greenwood (Leicester), D Ross (Sale); M Catt (Bath), M Dawson (Northampton); J Leonard (Harlequins), R Cockerill, D Garforth (both Leicester), G Archer (Newcastle), D Grewcock (Saracens), L Dallaglio (Wasps, capt), R Hill (Saracens), N Back (Leicester).
Replacements: P Grayson (Northampton), A Healey (Leicester) or K Bracken (Saracens), G Rowntree (Leicester), M Regan (Bath), C Sheasby (Wasps).
Match to be played at Twickenham on Saturday.

ally enjoyed that game against New Zealand, which went far better for me than the previous match for Emerging England in Huddersfield. But it was not until 7.30 yesterday morning that I was told to pack my boots and get myself up to London. If you'd asked me before Tuesday's match, or even immediately after it, I thought I was in with a chance of a Test place against the Springboks, I'd have said no."

Small was equally upbeat. "This is the best South African side I've been involved with," he

asserted. "The coach has an open-door policy and the senior players are treated as adults. I still enjoy the bad boy image — after all, it's good for business — and the fires still burn in me, but I've calmed down a little now."

If this weekend's desperately difficult match represents the "final piece in the jigsaw" for Bentley, it represents wholly different things for the other newcomers. For Matthew Dawson, who replaces the injured Kyran Bracken at scrum-half, and Neil Back, in on form at

open-side flanker, it is a clear case of *déjà vu*. Both have spent time at the head of the pecking order, only to find themselves rejected in the flicker of an eyelid.

For Danny Grewcock, the athletic lock forward from Saracens who replaces the banned Martin Johnson, it is a whole new ballgame. The cap he won in Argentina during the summer will always have a place on his mantelpiece, but he knows it was earned in the absence of Johnson, Simon Shaw and any number of injured competitors. This latest achievement is of another dimension — an opportunity to lock horns with a genuine world power on the biggest stage of all.

"We'd have liked Johnson to have played, of course," Woodward said yesterday. "He's a world-class forward. But I have no problems with Danny coming in; he has a massive future in front of him and while he knows he is not first choice at

the moment, he'll be as pumped up as anyone. In fact, I'm very happy with the whole side. The South Africans have a new coach and a sense of freshness about them — but we have confidence too and we are in no doubt whatsoever that this is a game we can win."

Along with his fellow selectors, Woodward chewed more fat over his back row selection than on any other area of his line-up. Although Lawrence Dallaglio, the captain, stays on the blind-side flank and Richard Hill moves from the open side to No 8, those positions are purely for the programme editors. The two will mix and match, depending on where a particular scrumage happens to be situated and which scrum-half is inserting the ball. In all probability, Dallaglio will attempt to capitalise on his startling second-half contribution at No 8 against the All Blacks last



Bentley: Has a bottomless reservoir of attitude

Saturday by filling the position at attacking set-piece. "Tim Rodber would come under consideration for his match against the New Zealanders on Tuesday, but he finished the game with a serious concussion and will not be available for three weeks," Woodward said. With Tony Diprose also unavailable with shoulder trouble — Bracken was forced to withdraw with a similar injury — the selectors may just have stumbled on a trio of exciting potential.

Llewellyn's return, page 30

TENNIS

Football may lure Ivanisevic away from Davis Cup

It ought to go against the grain for a tennis player but, as John Roberts reports, Goran Ivanisevic is apparently intent on putting the ball in the net — on the football pitch.

No matter that he is the mainstay of Croatia's Davis Cup challenge, it seems he would rather be playing for Hajduk Split come next February than upholding his nation's honour on the tennis court against Finland.

During the lean years, before the advent of Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman, the Lawn Tennis Association never thought to offer a racket to Paul Gascoigne, who was a talented junior player. The oversight might have delayed Britain's promotion in the Davis Cup.

Such logic belongs to the realm of Goran Ivanisevic, who is threatening to play football for his home team, Hajduk Split, rather than compete for Croatia in their Davis Cup tie against Finland next February. What seems a tall story, even for the 6ft 4in Ivanisevic, is given credibility by the football club's coach, Luka Bonacic. He has "seriously decided to pick Goran Ivanisevic for the team" to play Croatia Zagreb on 14 February.



A relaxed Pete Sampras plays with his racket during a training session in Gothenburg in preparation for the Davis Cup final between the United States and Sweden. Following today's draw, the event will begin with the opening singles match tomorrow. Photograph: Christof Stache/AP

An element of player power would appear to be at work. Ivanisevic, the runner-up at Wimbledon in 1992 and 1994, has vowed not to play for his country again as long as Sued Rizvanbegovic remains president of the Croatian Tennis Federation.

"For me," Rizvanbegovic

said, "the story must be a joke. We are still counting on Goran to play against Finland, but it's his decision."

The 26-year-old Ivanisevic, who regularly delivers 1,000 aces per year, calls up the word "unbelievable" to describe just about everything, good, bad or indifferent, and a few pots at the

Zagreb goal cannot be ruled out. After all, Ivanisevic has always been dangerous on grass — who could forget the volley he netted against Andre Agassi?

Tennis players are not exactly strangers to football grounds. Henman plays in goal for the LTA team, Fred Perry used to train with Arsenal, John McEn-

roe played soccer as a youngster and Boris Becker used to look longingly at Bayern Munich.

A word of caution, however. A few years ago, Ivanisevic had to undergo surgery for the first time in his life after damaging a cartilage in his right knee during a kickabout in Croatia. His only consolation

was that the operation enabled him to watch Hajduk Split play Ajax in the quarter-finals of the European Champions' Cup.

Perhaps Ivanisevic needs another challenge, but playing top-flight football would surely be beyond him. At the very least it could overstrain his brittle temperament.

France's World Cup concerns reach yellow fever pitch

The pitch that is being prepared for the opening match at the World Cup next year is looking distinctly off colour but, as John Lichfield reports from Paris, experts cannot agree why.

Imagine a World Cup final played on a pitch the colour of a mown hayfield. There is growing concern over the condition of the turf — laid at a record cost of £400,000 — in the splendid stadium constructed near Paris for the World Cup next June and July.

After a recent inspection of the Stade de France, Michel Platini, the former French international and co-president of the World Cup organising committee, complained that the turf looked rather yellow. The stadium engineer admitted only that the pitch appeared "dirty".

It had been treated with sand, he said, and too much had been applied. He would have the grass brushed.

Independent experts tell the French press that there may be a far more serious problem. Sections of the pitch, laid in September, have already been

replaced, making it look more like a chessboard than a sporting showpiece.

One school of thought blames the impressive and futuristic roof of the stadium, which has an elliptical cross-section. Some experts say the roof is too big. Even though it has been fitted with vast skylights, it may be blocking out too much light and preventing a reasonable circulation of air. As a result, they believe, the grass is not drying or photosynthesising properly and will be vulnerable to disease and incursions of fungi. (An especially nasty attack of mushrooms has already been repulsed).

Other experts say that the problem may be below the pitch, not above it, and even more serious. The stadium at Saint-Denis, just north of Paris, was built, after a great deal of political manoeuvring, on the site of an old gasworks. Before building work started, the subsoil was cleansed of chemical pollutants and an underground filter installed to absorb noxious substances.

But environmental experts point out that the chosen design sank the pitch 30 feet below the natural ground level of the site, in other words, much closer to the polluted subsoil than was really necessary. A pressure group called Robin des Bois (Robin

Hood) points out a substantial rise in the water table would make the underground protection system useless. The group also claims that the degree and variety of pollution of the site — including traces of cyanide, tar, benzol and phenol — is far greater than first admitted.

The stadium management continues to deny that there is a problem. The turf was temporarily damaged, they say, by a combination of excessive sanding and mowing. All yellowness will have disappeared in two to three weeks, they say, in plenty of time for the inaugural match, a friendly between France and Spain on 28 January.

According to *Le Monde*, a substitute is standing by. The company which laid the grass is cultivating another 3,000 square metres of identical turf, just in case the pitch does need to be replaced. The grass has been designed to be especially hardwearing, capable of sustaining 16 hours of play a week.

A grim thought remains. Brazil, with their canary yellow shirts, will play in the stadium in the first match of the 1998 World Cup on 10 June. If the pitch remains yellow, tens of millions of TV viewers around the world could be struggling to pick out the 1994 world champions.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD
No. 3467, Thursday 27 November
By Spunns

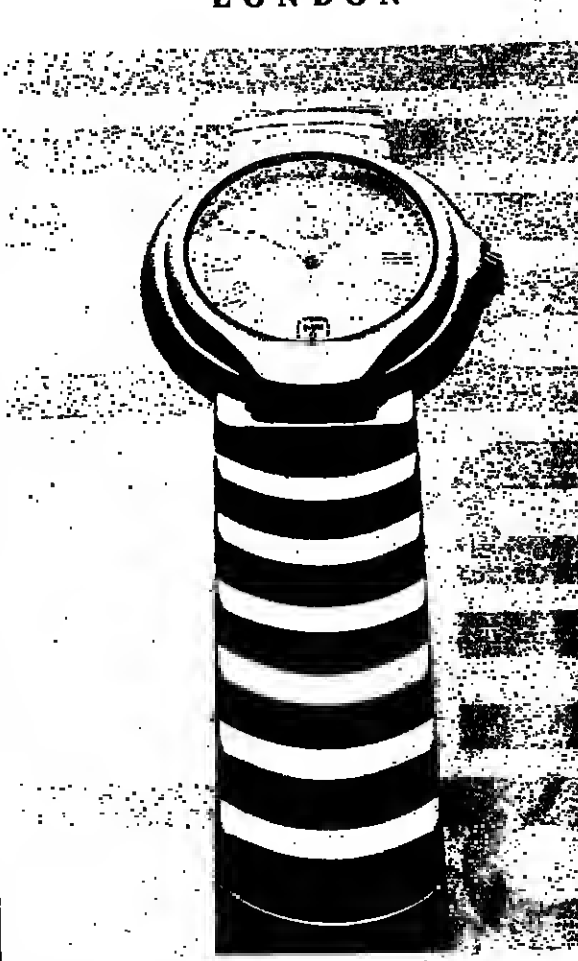
Across

- Refuse to go in vehicle following Lord Mayor's show? (8)
- Flow interrupted by artist's vehement harangue (6)
- Glass brought back from Jena, perhaps (4)
- Man's crisis, inordinate self-absorption? (10)
- Very talented people producing Oxford Street publicity handouts (4,6)
- Steer straight? (4)
- Edges back towards king giving a silly grin (5)
- Scholars of the highest class? (5,4)
- Drinks advertised by misspelled signs around front of local? (3,6)
- Bridge players with highest cards manoeuvre with stealth (5)

Down

- German woman gives Father gold (4)
- Whereby umpire calls 'over' with no runs scored? (6,4)
- Repairman takes an apprentice without intelligence (10)
- Day of Roman's eclipse, as Greek dramatist concludes? (4)
- Savage force that is used to replace organisation's leader (6)
- Half-day tariff is steep (8)
- Signs of hesitation about article on Italy identifying dangerous element (7)
- Items of clothing the sister cast off (3,6)
- Cancel publication when advance is withdrawn (5)
- Confused situation of Piccadilly bigamist? (5-4, 6)
- Co-ordinates victory in cricket match over here (7)
- Gun rinse with new formulation (5)
- Lose hope and submerge ultimately in swirling rapids (7)
- Banker appearing fashionable in relatively elaborate attire? (9)
- Priest punting on airs, perhaps, according to man from Tel Aviv (7)
- People will be accommodated in new semi, very big (7)
- Part of sofa, in check moquette originally (3-4)
- American lady's holding up court officer (5)
- Having 150 in to dine chews a certain ostentation (5)

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